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THE ORCHARD BOOKS

XV: *The Mirror of Simple Souls*

THE MIRROR OF SIMPLE SOULS

By an unknown French mystic of the thirteenth century

Translated into English by
M. N.

Now first edited from the MSS.
by
CLARE KIRCHBERGER

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OMNIBUS IN CHRISTO DILECTIS

"To the worschip of God and of tham that be made free of God; and to the profite of tham that ne bene, that yet schall be, and God wille."

Mirror.

INTRODUCTION

MSS. and Text

THE Mirror of Simple Souls, here for the first time printed, came to light in 1911, when Mr. J. A. Herbert, Keeper of MSS. in the British Museum, pointed it out to Miss E. Underhill, in a MS. purchased for the British Museum at the Amherst sale (now MS. Adds. 37790). Miss Underhill wrote an account of the work which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, 1911, and published some extracts in No. 8 of the *Porch* in the same year. At a later date Miss Hope Allen discovered another MS. in the Bodleian (Bodl. 505), and a third in the Library of St John's College, Cambridge (MS. 71), together with a Latin translation made from the English version, by Richard Methley of Mount Grace, Yorks, extant in MS. 221 of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

Up to date no further English MSS. have appeared, nor has any trace been found of the thirteenth-century French original of which the *Mirror* is a translation.

The three English MSS. all belong to the

second third of the fifteenth century, and Bodley 505 is almost contemporary with MS. Adds. 37790, but the dialect is slightly more northern and retains some older forms. It appears also that the scribe had access to an older MS. with different readings and occasionally additional matter, and these readings correct the British Museum version. Therefore the Bodley MS. has been chosen as the basis of this text.

The book is divided by all the scribes into long sections, approximately the same, but Bodley further subdivides into chapters, and in a late fifteenth-century hand there are added analyses of the subject-matter of these chapters, written on small scraps of paper and pasted in the margin opposite the capital letters which denote the chapter divisions. We cannot determine whether these analyses belonged to the earlier MS. of the book, but it seems improbable, for there is no indication of them either in the British Museum or Cambridge, or the Latin MSS. We have, however, retained them as affording a valuable indication of the general drift of the argument, and as elucidating the unpunctuated chaos of the British Museum MS.

The Cambridge MS. belongs also to the mid-fifteenth century. It is in a better hand than either of the others, and is both beautifully written and illuminated. It appears to

follow the same version as the British Museum copy, is divided into large sections, but though the occurrence of many illuminated capitals might indicate chapter heads, these are not specifically numbered or analysed, nor do they correspond wholly with the Bodleian arrangement. Variants of reading are unimportant.

The Latin version (MS. Pembroke 221) of the late fifteenth century made by Richard Methley from the English is interesting. In his original Prologue, this writer mentions the Prologue of the English translator, stating that he was unknown to him, "in anglicum idioma nescio quis eundem transtulit"; he does not latinise this English prologue, but merely sums up the gist of the remarks, omitting all the personal details which constitute its charm. Further, he discards the M. N. glosses without mention or apology, and adds his own glosses and illustrations from Scripture, sometimes by way of marginal notes, at other times as an expansion of the text. They are less explanatory and practical than the M. N. glosses, and consist largely of quotations from Dionysius and the Victorines. He is also much concerned to repudiate any charge of heresy that may have formulated in the mind of readers.*

* Pembroke MS. 221 has a note at the head of the first leaf attributing the original work to "Russh-

By the kindness of Monsignor Auguste Pelzer, of the Vatican Library, and of Dom Philibert Schmitz, O.S.B., I am able to state that besides the Cambridge Latin text four other Latin translations are known and one Italian MSS. Three of these are in the Vatican,* and it appears that they are translations from the *lost French text*, and differ considerably from Methley's version made from the English translation. A curious point is that these MSS. quote the *Author's* Prologue "Ego creatura," at the end of the text, but without any indication

broke qui fuit prior de ordine cartusiensi et hunc libellum primo composuit." An impossible proposition, as the original was sent to be censored to Godefroi de Fontaines, *c.* 1303 (he died 1306), and Ruysbroeck was born only *c.* 1293. This confusion in the mind of our North-country monk may be due to similarity of doctrine in some points—*i.e.*, the dark night, the valley of peace, etc. By the middle of the fifteenth century the works of the Flemish school were of nigh repute among English mystics.

Richard Methley (b. 1451) died as vicar of Mount Grace, Charterhouse, in 1528. He left, besides this work and his translation of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, a small autobiographical opuscule, Trinity College, Cambridge, MS. 1160. It is a devout sketch of the daily life of the Carthusian monk, together with his own aspirations, fears, and experiences.

* MSS. Vat. Lat. 4355; Rossian, 4; Chisian, C. iv. 85.

that it forms an epilogue or a misplaced prologue. Richard Methley translates it at the head of his text. It is, nevertheless, from Methley's version of the Author's Prologue that we derive certain definite indications concerning the three censors who are less fully characterised in the Vatican MSS.*

The present text is based on the Bodley version as containing older readings. It has been collated with the British Museum and both English and Latin Cambridge MSS. Some of the readings have been elucidated by reference to the Latin version of Richard Methley, who, it was hoped, might have known the exact value of contemporary mystical phrases, and whose Latin renderings shed much light on the syntax of an unpunctuated English MS.

The spelling has been modernised and occasional alterations made in the structure of the sentences, together with various minor omissions and changes, all of which, however regrettable, seemed necessary in order to present the reader with an intelligible

* "Frater johanne *de querayne*." This is not in Vat. Lat. 4355. "Dompnus Franco *cancellarius*, abbathie de Viliers" (rendering for English "cantor" also absent from Latin MS. 4355). Père E. Moreau, S.J., assures me that no trace of any Franco, *cantor* or *cancellarius*, can be found in the documents relating to the Abbey of Villiers.

version. An attempt has been made to retain as much as possible of the original, but it will be understood that exigencies of sense, of space, and of doctrinal expediency have modified what, in any case, does not claim to be a critical text.

The editor wishes to acknowledge a great debt of gratitude to all who have kindly assisted in preparing this edition. Much is due to Miss E. Underhill; Mgr. Pelzer, of the Vatican Library; Miss Hope Allen; Mr. J. A. Herbert, of the British Museum; to the Librarians of Bodley; of Pembroke and St John's College, Cambridge, who kindly lent MSS.; to Miss Ruffer, Miss M. Daunt, and many others.

A special tribute of thanks is due to the General Editor of the Series, Dom R. Hudleston, O.S.B., and to the Very Rev. Fr. R. H. Steuart, S.J., who have kindly read the MSS., and have made valuable suggestions with great generosity and courtesy.

The Mirror

The Mirror of Simple Souls is a treatise of some 60,000 words, on the progress of the soul from the earlier stages of the spiritual life to its highest and rarest experiences. The treatment is didactic and psychological;

the author describes not his personal experience but the characteristic of a typical soul—"of these souls we will take one for all, to speak the more readily" (I, vii). He throws this method into relief by choosing the form of a dialogue, in which the characters are the personified qualities, Love, Virtue, Reason, Holy Church, etc. This form he owes to his age, which delighted in the highly sophisticated discussions of the Puys and the Courts of Love, and which in drama turned from the earlier Mystery plays to the Morality. Many verse "Mirrors of the World," and other didactic poems, are found in the French literature of the time, but no vernacular prose treatises of this dimension, still less of this nature, religious and mystical, are known to have existed. The originality of the form and the boldness of the outlook combine to distinguish the *Mirror* from the Latin treatises on the spiritual life, current in the religious world of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Gerson, who is the next French author to write on these matters, always fuses the devotional, the ascetic and the mystical, according to the older method, but our author has some instinct at least of the distinction between the species and their right relation to each other. This can be conveyed through the dramatic form, more convinc-

ingly, perhaps, than in a methodical treatise. Nothing of this kind exists in French literature until we come to the spiritual writings of the early seventeenth century, and the mystical parts of St Francis de Sales' *Amour de Dieu*.

The Form

The form derives, perhaps, from the verse *Jeu-Partis*. These were verse competitions produced at the Puys, in which some question is mooted and alternate sides are taken by two or more characters. Generally the subject is proposed on one side, and the opponent chooses his argument and defends it on the humaner line of reasoning. The proposer takes the superficial rationalist and often satirical point of view, and at the end an appeal is made to the Judge of the Court, who sums up and solves the problem. Topical questions and allusions are frequent; the chief characters are often Amour, Raison, Courtoisie, Jolive Pensée.* The method is also that of the scholastic disputations at the Sorbonne, and reflects the interest of a society delighting in sophistry and intellectual subtleties of every kind. To have applied this mode to the consideration of the mystical life, shows an ingenuity not altogether unworldly.

* Groeber, *Grundriss der romanischen Philologie*.

The Author

We cannot determine with any exactness who was the author of the *Mirror*, nor has anything further come to light since Miss Underhill, in 1911, conjectured that he may have been a secular priest or a Carthusian living on the borders of Flanders and France in the last third of the thirteenth century. He refers to a river, flowing through many countries, called the Meuse or Oise. This, together with the fact that two of the three censors to whom he sent his work belonged to the locality of Liège and Querayne, and that the third, though a Master of Arts at the Sorbonne, was also a Canon of Liège, and intimately connected with ecclesiastical affairs in that city, seems to establish the nationality of the author and the locality where the work was put forth.

He was certainly in touch with the learned world of his day, deeply read in mystical theology, and experienced in questions of scholastic philosophy. His chief sources seem to have been St Augustine, Clement of Alexandria, Dionysius the Areopagite, with the commentaries of the Victorines. He is greatly indebted to Richard of St Victor and to the author of the "Letter to the Brethren

of Mons Dei." Certain passages in this letter give almost verbally the ideas and the expression of some of the most original passages in the *Mirror*. Perhaps Gerson when he fulminated against the "letter" and those who exaggerated its doctrines, had our author in mind.

Whoever he may have been, he forms a link between the Flemish mystics of the fourteenth century, and the older scholastics and theologians who wrote on prayer in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

It would appear that the heretical influences from the South of France and Germany were already spreading northwards, and manifesting themselves in Flanders and the Netherlands when Eckhart began to preach. The sermons of Eckhart, Suso and Tauler, and their school were as much intended to combat heresy as to edify the spiritual laity. Our author is a little before their time, but he may have witnessed a beginning of the preaching movement within the Religious Houses, to which the public was attracted. The formation of the lay-societies of devout people was beginning and had, in South Germany, made considerable progress, but the *Mirror* belongs to the end of the thirteenth century, and is therefore before the birth of the Deventer and Windesheim groups. The similarity in point of view is, however, clear,

and as we have seen, the Englishman who in the late fifteenth century translated the *Mirror* into Latin believed the work to have been composed by Ruysbroeck. He was haply ignorant of the fact that the author sent his " inspired " treatise for approbation to one " Dr. Venerabilis Godfridus de Fontanis," Master of Theology at the Sorbonne, who flourished *c.* 1286–1303, and who appears to have died in 1306, when Ruysbroeck was a child of thirteen. This establishes the approximate date of the composition. Of Godfrey of Fountains we know a good deal. He was evidently in a position and of a character to stamp the work favourably or the reverse; his approbation is guarded, sober, balanced. We know that his sympathies were partly Thomistic, but on the points which affected the work he still adhered to the older scholasticism. As an opponent of the Mendicants his approbation formed a valuable counterpart to that of the Franciscan Friar, Fr. John of Querayne, whose judgement, in virtue of his " life of perfection," was unassailable.

The third censor was Don Frank, Cantor of the Abbey of Villiers, whose interests (perhaps because of his office) were in scriptural interpretation. The list of monks of that house during the late twelfth century show several named " Frank," but Père

Moreau, S.J., assures me that there are no traces of identification with the person described in our text.

The opinion of all these censors is to the same effect, that the book was sound theologically, but laid itself open to misinterpretation at the hands of superficial and unlearned men. Moreover, they agreed that the fair promises of so high a spirituality might lead the unwise to adopt a course more exacting in its claims than they could foresee, and to which, not being called by God, they should certainly never attain. The boldness and humour of the Fleming seems to have pleased his censors, and their verdict appears to have satisfied him. His book, however, must have been carefully guarded—as was prescribed—for no trace of the vernacular version is to be found to this day, and we have only the English version and the Latin translation made from it by Richard Methley, together with the various Latin versions in the Vatican, made from the original French version. There is also an Italian translation.

The dangers which the thirteenth-century critics foresaw, and against which they warned the author, were thoroughly fought out in the late fourteenth century, and again in the seventeenth century. The position of the Church in these matters is now so clear, that for Catholics the warnings against

Pantheism and Quietism are superfluous. But that is not the case with the wide circle of readers who do not recognise the Church's authority, and in this age those heresies are more widespread and flagrant than in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. With this in view, explanatory notes have been added calling attention to difficult passages, the interpretation of which might otherwise have been left to the reader's own discretion. It is hoped that these notes will not appear unduly didactic and intrusive in matters of spiritual interpretation.

Translator

To pass from the question of authorship to that of the identity of the translator is to sail from one unknown sea into another. How did the MS. reach England? Who was the humble and spiritually minded M. N., who undertook the work of translation, and whose careful glossing in the direction of orthodoxy seems to have redeemed the English version from the fate of its original? We only know what he tells us in his simple and devout Prologue. Richard Methley, writing a century later, states that the English translator was unknown to him, and treats his work with scant consideration and sympathy. He cannot, therefore, have been an out-

standing personality in the Carthusian Order. Perhaps he was one of the unknown fourteenth-century mystics who wrote as disciples of Rolle or Walter Hilton. His language is midland with some northern characteristics, and the book seems to have been written towards the end of the fourteenth century; for this, as well as for reasons of style and thought, he seems more akin to Hilton in prudence and balance, though the tone of his Prologue, and of the devotional outpouring which forms an epilogue, recall the abundant fervour and simple tenderness of the followers of Richard Rolle, the group of writers of whom William of Nassington is chief.

It is possible that the French MS. reached England through the agency of a group of persons who accompanied Queen Philippa of Hainault to England in 1327. Chief of these was Walter de Manny, who, with Michael of Northbrook, Bishop of London, was co-founder of the London Charterhouse. Michael of Northbrook had visited Flanders as a young clerk, before his active career in the service of Edward III brought him there as a statesman; and the early documents and charters of the London Charterhouse make it clear that there was communication between the houses in Flanders and the new foundation, in the establishment of which the

Bishop had a larger share than is commonly known. It is scarcely conceivable that we should attribute to Michael of Northbrook the translator's device "M. N."; his character, occupation, and date of death (1361) render such an hypothesis unlikely, but not impossible.

It has, however, been suggested with more probability, that "if the *Mirror* did get into England through a Carthusian door, it may have been on the occasion of the foundation of the Charterhouse at Shene in 1414, when a number of monks from various Flemish Charterhouses were sent over to help fill the cells (forty in number, an altogether unprecedented size for a Charterhouse), the English houses being unable to furnish a sufficient quota."

Content

The *content* of this treatise need not here be fully analysed. The division into XX *Distinctiones*, or Divisions, and the subdivision into chapters, is more arbitrary than systematic; nevertheless the work falls into three parts, of which Divisions I-V; VI-XVII; XVIII-XX mark the approximate boundaries.

Divisions I-V contain the chief doctrines set forth in all their vigorous originality, and the method is chiefly descriptive. Here the

dialogue is between Love (the judge and master of ceremonies in the disputation), " this Free Soul," and Reason; and the point at issue is the freedom of the soul from fettering conditions in the highest stages of the spiritual life. After the description of the habits, the point of view of the free soul, her aloneness and peace in God, her independence of judgement born of true dependence on God (Division III), follows the explanation of her attitude towards the pursuit of virtues, and an outline of what freedom from desire and will imply in the spiritual life (Divisions IV and V). Here the doctrine of the Areopagite is brought into practical application, and Division IV, chapters viii and ix, and Division V, chapters v, vi, viii, x, contain some of the distinctive theories which mark the book. The doctrine of not being *with* herself, and naught willing, which first appeared as a method towards peace of soul, is now seen as part of God's claim upon the soul and as a passive purgation. We have come to a stage when intensive mortification of the soul and spirit is described and shown as God's action rather than the soul's endeavour, and as resulting in a deepening experience of union with God (chap. xi), and the Division ends with a renewed warning concerning the fewness of those who will understand, and

the condition of participating in "this life"; "they only understand it whom fine love teacheth. . . . But him behoveth to be dead and mortified of all deaths, that finely should understand it."

The VIth Division, the second part of the book (VI-XVII), in which the description of the nature of the "free soul" is mingled with sundry recapitulations, is illustrated partly from reminiscences of earlier mystical works—St Bonaventure, St Augustine, Richard of St Victor. Divisions VI and VII classify souls as "perished," and "marred," as distinct from those in "life of spirit"—and later this latter type is again distinguished from those "free souls" in the highest life. The gist of this teaching seems to be from Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* IV and VI), but it is mingled with the doctrine of the "far night" (which we shall discuss later), and which seems here to mark the soul's full entry into the passive state of Quiet, experience of Rapture or Ecstasy (Division XI).

The soul feels all to be done for her and in her by God himself. As the knowledge of her "naught" deepens, her knowledge of God's "bounty" grows. There are chapters in which this theme is sung with an intensity of fervour that can find no expression but the constant reiteration of simple phrases such as "of him, by him, for him . . . of his

bounty, by bounty given . . . my naught . . .," until the text is in danger of becoming unreadable through the monotony of these recurrences, but they are akin to the famous night-long prayer of St Francis, "My God, O my God." Indeed the last sections of the book drop the doctrinal and expository tone, and become prayer and aspiration.

It will be seen that the second part of the book, from Division VI approximately, is more obscure, more subtle in thought, often monotonous in expression and repetition of phrase and word. No doubt this is the part of which the translator warned us that "the French boke . . . is yuel writen and in sum places for defaute of words and silables the reson is awaye." He has exercised his discretion, but in these latter obscurities, thinking that prudence was the better part of valour, has often translated word for word, so that the hopeless obscurity of his English version occasionally yields some light if it be translated back literally into Old French. Not even so, in many cases, can I claim to understand, or to offer more than a guess for my version of the text.

This second part deals with the highest states, not merely by description, but it takes up some of the previous points of controversy and shows them in relation to the further

experience acquired. If, therefore, a certain monotonous sameness is felt, it will yield to reflection, and we shall find that new ground is really covered, and that the familiar lines of thought are gathered up in a new method of approach, and issue in a noble consummation. The chapters of the last three Divisions are amongst the finest in the whole work and may be considered autobiographical. (Divisions XVIII-XX.)

It is after the Death of Reason (though the writer allows her to reappear unawares once or twice) that the method changes. The difficult Division XIII is a commentary and exegesis on some of the former points, culminating in a dialogue in which Love takes the soul to task and presses home sharply the bitter points, once directed against Reason, but now aimed at the soul, in whom all self-love must be naughted. Then follows, in Division XIV, a summing-up of the seven degrees or estates; it recalls the first chapter of the treatise, but is an interesting summary of St Augustine's seven stages in the *De Quantitate Animae*, treated with the free originality we have learnt to expect of our author. Divisions XV, XVI, and XVII are short interludes, an apology for himself, and an exhortation to discreet secrecy put into the mouth of the Blessed Trinity. Between these themes is fitly set

the plea of Fine Love, that she is above the Law but not against the Law. Division XVIII takes a new form. The soul, fulfilled of God, breaks out into rapturous praise and aspirations of love (indeed all the latter part of the book is characterised by the triumphal emergence of the affective powers), and is led by Truth, first through a short series of " contemplations," given as a means for the liberation of the " marred souls " from their self-centredness. Then follows a piece of autobiography. The soul describes the last stage of her spiritual journey, the nature of the fierce conflict to which Love puts her love, and the final issue. Psychologically these pages are unsurpassed, though the form is unequal. The soul describes her own rapturous protestations to Love, and is brought up sharp by three penetrating claims for which she was unprepared. Then comes the final breakdown of selfhood, the death of " affection of spirit." The personal poignancy has survived the diffuseness of the other pages, and comes down to us through the centuries, echoing first the bitterness of Rama and then the triumph of the Magdalen. " Thus my will is martyred and my love martyred, ye have them to martyrdom brought. . . . I thought sometime alway to have lived of love, by desire of good will. Now be these two things

ended in me." Righteousness and Mercy ask how they may comfort her, and what help she would have; and she refuses all help but God himself—who Is, and she is Naught. God himself offers her that she should take what she desires and have *her own will*. And she will not have her will, for she is naught and hath no will. She is content with what God is in himself. "I will nothing that is not of the bounty of love." This is the key to freedom, and then "the outpouring of the divine love shewed me, by divine light, an highful opening approaching to the Truth, that shewed me suddenly him and me. Him so high and me so low that I might no more from thence rise, nor help of myself have, and that was best." This is the established state that later writers call Spiritual Marriage. Two further chapters summarise the teaching to be drawn from the whole work, and especially the last incidents; and a wonderful little mystical lyric, anticipating the method of St John of the Cross, concludes the book. This analysis should encourage the reader over those long passages where admittedly scholastic subtleties and monotonous repetitions threaten to overwhelm our interest, and where we recognise at times that the doctrinal dangers we have already noted are accentuated rather than diminished.

There is a certain rhythm in this latter part of the work, in the alternate descriptions of the condition of the free souls and that of the " marred." A balance is kept where the tendency is to emphasise the lyrical side (cf. *St John of the Cross*, two last books). The contradictions of doctrine are only superficial, if we keep in mind the distinctions made earlier between the four (not three) classes, the perished, the marred, those in life of affection of spirit, and those free souls united to God by love.

Author's Sources

Our author is clearly more influenced by Franciscan than scholastic philosophy, a follower of St Augustine and St Bonaventure. What he owed to Dionysius Areopagita came to him through the Victorines; but he is, on the whole, untouched by the new scholasticism that was formulated by St Thomas, and had not as yet dominated the thought of the schools. The main idea of his work is the glorification of love above intellectual knowledge; of the immediate knowledge of God above the rational—reason. Goodness and goodwill is set above knowing. This is carried to the extreme in his contemptuous attacks on that Reason which is " litteral," and in his glorification of not-knowing and

not-willing, culminating in the experience of the Dark Night.

Nevertheless he is far from depreciating Understanding, as a separate faculty from the rationalising Reason, and the tenor of his argument brings him into line with the great mystics who have held together the value of Knowledge and the value of Love as means towards the apprehension of God. It is significant that, in the last stage, he is led by Truth. When all feeling of Love and Desire is dead, an act of cognition is still possible "shewed me," etc. when the last revelation is afforded (see p. 286).

This description marks him as an Augustinian who holds the possibility of the immediate vision of God; and though he may have learned much from St Bernard's affective theology, he does not accept the theories of his mystical theology. Perhaps some of the irony of the method of "beholdings" proper for "the marred" was intended for a school of thought that fostered imaginative meditation.

To the follower of St Bernard, however, who wrote the letter to the "Brethren of Mons Dei," he owed much. Whether he himself was a monk of this or of a Charterhouse in the same locality, we cannot tell. It is possible, and his views are much illuminated by a comparison with those of the writer of

the "Letter." It is the easiest of his literary sources to trace. The following passages will suffice as examples, both of the doctrine to which objection might be made, and of the vindication offered.

LETTER TO THE BRETHREN OF MONS DEI (M.P.L. 184, pp. 297-300).

"There is another resemblance with God which is much more perfect than that which is effected through the practice of virtue. It is that which has already been to some extent spoken of, which is so special that it is no longer the resemblance, but the unity of the mind with God, since man becomes one thing with God; one same mind, not only through the unity of the same will, but by a certain closer union of the will . . . which removes from the soul the power of willing otherwise than God. This union is called unity of the mind, not only because the Holy Spirit brings it about and guides therein the mind of man, but because it is the Holy Spirit himself, God-love. It is through this Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the Son, that are produced the sweetness, the gentleness, the caresses and embrace, and all that there may be in common between these two divine Persons in this sovereign unity of the truth and truth of

unity. The same thing happens (*in suo modo*) in a manner, in the union of man with God, as in that which unites the Son substantially with the Father, and the Father with the Son. In the embrace of the Father and the Son it is, as it were, the Holy Spirit which is intermediary. In this ineffable and unthinkable way man merits to *become of God, yet not God, for that which God is by nature, man is by Grace.*"

This passage, which is safeguarded from error by the last clause, precedes another in which the idea of the impeccability of the soul is more strongly and more dangerously expressed.

But this also has its echoes in the *Mirror*.

" The unity of the mind with God, in the man who keeps his heart raised to heaven, is the state of the perfection of the will which tends towards God. It is realised when not only does he no longer will other than God wills, but is so advanced in love that he is not able to will other than God wills. For to will what God wills is to be already like him; to be unable to will except what God wills, is to be already what God is, in whom to be and to will are one and the same thing."

The foregoing paragraph must not necessarily be interpreted as teaching the impeccability of the soul in these highest states;

the writer may not have been thinking of sin, but of all the positive aspects of man's relationship to God, in which unity of will may be freely exercised; such as desire for union, prayer, and the aspirations of Love.

Our author is therefore clear of the danger of those sects that abounded in South France, Italy and Lower Germany, both at his time and later in the fourteenth century, whose teaching exalted Love and Unknowing; sometimes at the expense of morality, more frequently in defiance of authority, and independent of ecclesiastical organisation and sacramental principles. How far the influence of Eckhart had already penetrated we cannot tell; he must have begun to preach before this book was written. It is impossible to estimate the influence of the *Mirror* on that susceptible Flemish-Franco borderland in that age of spiritual fervour, the early fourteenth century. Certainly there are unmistakable points of contact between its teaching and that of the Brethren of the Common Life, Ruysbroeck, Eckhart, Suso—even the *Gottesfreunde*. In England we can only hazard conjectures. The MSS. occur in collections of versions of the chief fourteenth-century English mystics, and at least three of the four books belonged to the Charterhouses of London and Yorkshire. This fact suggests that, if the work was not

popular, it was at least appreciated by those whose opinion might be valued. An examination of the original work of Richard Methley, the Latin translator of the *Mirror*, shows that he had hardly imbibed the teaching of his author. However expert he may have been in handling the glosses of the Areopagite and in commenting on the *Mirror*, his own mind reflects dreads and delights of an elementary kind. He has not passed the stage of visions and auditions, and reminds us at his best of the sweetness of Rolle's Love of Jesus, at his worst of the Cornish:

> "Ghosties, and ghoulies,
> And long-leggity beasties,
> And things that go Bump in the night."

Yet this proves nothing. We may surmise, moreover, that the English translator's fears were not ungrounded, and that, if plain Englishmen found the Frenchman's treatise beyond their grasp in the first version he produced, the second may have met with similar fate. No doubt the form of the dialogue between personified abstract qualities was not as familiar in England as in France, and the subtleties of the scholastic mind, though equally represented at Oxford and Cambridge, may have been further removed from the English Charterhouses and those who perused these treatises.

The Doctrinal Significance of the "Mirror"

Certain points in the doctrine of the *Mirror* call for special comment, in that they seem to contribute something to the history of mystical theology.

First we take the "Far night," the experience described by the Areopagite as a dark knowing of God. This has been admirably analysed by Dom Justin McCann, in his Introduction to the *Cloud of Unknowing*, in this series. In view of this no further analysis is needed. I would only venture to add that, whereas the Areopagite represents the Darkness as a necessary mode of knowing God, to be attained by an elevation of the mind, laborious at times, the author of the *Mirror* regards the darkness as being of a temporary nature, arising when the spiritual life is well advanced, and being intermittent in its first approaches. To it he attributes certain purgative and illuminative effects which become more marked as advance is made. Though he describes the ensuing complete passivity of the soul as belonging chiefly to the times of prayer, it would appear that, at the end of the journey, there is some sort of identification of the soul with "the gentle far night," in its complete union with God (cf. Division XII, chap. ii).

If this is the case, we have an analysis which differs considerably from the earlier conceptions of the followers of the Areopagite, as it does from the English mystics and from those of the Gregorian school. Further, it seems to be a transition towards the ideas of St John of the Cross. St John definitely assigns a painful significance to the Dark Night, he regards it as a means of purgation, intervening between the stages of illumination. He has derived from the same sources as our author those distinctions of "flesh, psyche (*i.e.*, mind and will), spirit," regarded as states of the soul, from and in which she needs purgation; and accordingly distinguishes the Dark Night as being first of the senses, then of the soul, lastly of the spirit.

Our author resembles the English mystics in his conception that the far night is not necessarily painful. No doubt the mentality of the northern race found the "stilling of the intellect" less trying than did the Latin races.

It has been pointed out that St John of the Cross has in these matters been influenced by scholastic theology, but our author lived in the day when St Thomas was still lecturing and writing, and it must have been shortly after his death that the *Mirror* was sent to Godfrey of Fountains for censorship. Godfrey of Fountains was in the forefront

of the virulent controversy concerning St Thomas's teaching, which broke out at the Sorbonne and at Oxford between 1280 and 1300. He held a middle course steadily between the extreme Thomism of the Dominican party and the hostile opposition. The *Mirror* provides many illustrations of the conflict then raging, notably the obscure passage concerning the Sacrament "if it be brayed in a mortar," which possibly refers to controversy over the nature of the Eucharist. No doubt other points will occur to the reader familiar with scholastic theology.

In any case, our author was not the type of the simple unlettered monk, but combined with his mystical knowledge a keen appreciation of the intellectual issues which are one aspect of the spiritual problem he set himself to describe.

If it may be said that the "work of the intellect" *in* prayer spoils prayer, that does not apply to the habitual state of the mind at other times than those of prayer, and the best vindication of mystical union is a life intensely fruitful in some direction. The sphere and mode of this activity is comparatively insignificant.

Therefore the ardours of intellectual speculation at the Sorbonne at the end of the thirteenth century are known to our author; he has assimilated speculations that we find

hard to grasp, and he relates them to his subject, not for a display of learning, but simply because certain problems of the spiritual life do naturally evoke questions that have been handled in the schools, and the synthesis of the intellectual problems is frequently to be found in a spiritual law. Hence some of the satiric humour, the utter contempt for the spirit which would interpret the whole of life in syllogisms, and regulate the spiritual course by the laws of scholastic logic.

The humour at the expense of Reason that characterises this work, is at times a double-edged sword, but more generally it is a persistent contempt for rationalistic interpretations, which is quite distinct from and compatible with a real acceptance of the rational point of view.

The scheme of the Threefold Ascent, as expounded by Love and the Free Soul, is a vindication of the valid rational factor; and there may be significance in the passage where, rejoicing over the death of Reason (the rationalistic figure), Love claims that she herself will now put the questions to the Soul which Reason would have asked, and she does in effect argue awhile from the rationalist point of view until, later, rationalism merges into illumined Reasonableness.

That right Reason is a part of Love is clear

from the latter part of the book, where it is shown that even laggards in the spiritual life may yet "arrive," and also that some souls are definitely called by the methods of Reason (the personage reappears), and must follow their own perceptions, albeit inferior, in order to come to the ultimate possession of God.

The parallelism between our author's doctrine of the Dark Night and that of St John of the Cross admits of further analysis. The snares and pitfalls into which the soul may fall, both with regard to spiritual phenomena, such as visions and auditions, and with respect to the manifold defects or shortcomings of Faith, Hope and Charity, are analysed by St John in a systematic form, but are found in our treatise woven into the web of the work. The method is more descriptive, allusive, with the art and artlessness of an earlier generation. Notwithstanding the apparent want of system and diffuseness of the *Mirror*, some trace of a method can be found. We shall seek it less in any close sequence of the divisions and chapters than in a certain interior rhythm. A reader has complained of the perpetual recurrence of certain themes to the point of satiety. Further investigation leads to the discovery that the movement is not a cyclical repetition, but an ascending spiral leading

from earth to heaven. As the soul mounts, the same panorama is unfolded again and again, but the point of view continually changes; and with each step of the ascent our eye has command over a wider landscape. The same features reappear. We describe them afresh, as our new point of vantage shows them in a fresh relation to their immediate surroundings, and then to the further and more distant scene of which they are a part. As our ascent progresses the details of familiar buildings are less easily discerned, they are hidden in surrounding greenery, and that itself is merged in the plain, and the plain tends to merge into the hills, till at last range beyond range of hills fixes and stills our vision. Yet the eye still catches the earlier sequences; almost mathematically she apprehends them now. They swim into the retina, to be instantly classified by experimental knowledge, and most speedily dismissed in the search for the ultimate, ever-increasing joy of the mountain ranges. Beyond these we know we shall never see, but the freshness, newness and joy thereof shall remain for ever inexhaustible.

Some such illustration will explain the rhythm of our work and the recurrences of theme, the appropriation of the thought of forerunners, and will vindicate our author from the charges of padding and plagiarism

that have been levelled at him—and at so many of the medieval creators.

We have spoken of the influence of the Areopagite on our author. The recurring antithesis between knowledge and unknowing, willing and not-willing, being and not-being (in earlier chapters and also Division IX, chap. vi), are some of the characteristics chiefly elaborated in the *Mirror*. The author as a Latin and a member of the north-eastern race of Frenchmen, whose temperament, practical and logical, carries with it a predisposition to argumentative speculation, applies the paradoxes inherent in the Dionysian system not only to the method of prayer and the attainment of God—as does the author of the *Cloud*—but to the whole life of the individual. The *Mirror* is one for the whole "soul"; "simple" that is—"single." It is a guide to perfect prayer and a "form of perfect living" rolled into one. This is the originality in an age when religious treatises were *either* ascetic *or* speculative, and when the mystical life was sometimes studied as a department of philosophy, or seen only through the eyes of moralists, or even degraded by the interpretation of heresy and self-indulgence.

The difficulty arises when our author, following the Dionysian doctrine as inter-

preted by Erigena and the Victorines, emphasises the monistic tendencies, and verges on Pantheism and on its corollary Quietism. There are passages in the MS. which may be construed in this sense, and these have been fully annotated in their place. The general impression is against this reading, and the passages in the Prologues and on pp. 54, 66 and pp. 155, 184 are quite definite in guarding against such an interpretation. The humour and common sense that mark the treatment throughout is a significant indication of the real sanity of the author's point of view. Allowance must be made for exaggeration incident to the literary form; for a Latin tendency to stress the speculative element and express it unduly; and for a dramatic touch of conscious bluff, a protest against conventionalism.

The attacks against Reason and the virtues, regarded in this light, are at once seen in due proportion. Moreover, the originality of the book lies in the fact that the author dismisses in a few pages the whole subject of ascetic discipline, which as a rule forms the main part of the spiritual treatises of the epoch. He begins where others leave off, and assumes an acquaintance with and loyal adherence to those principles of Christian *ascesis* which are the basis of the monastic and of the spiritual life generally. The

mystical life is the fruit of these, and our author is careful to show that he addresses himself only to those souls who are called to the higher life. We know that the teaching of St Bernard in the addresses on the Canticles and the treatises by Richard of St Victor cannot have been intended for the uninitiated, and, moreover, both St Teresa and St John of the Cross suffered the same accusations as were evidently brought against the theories of our author. The last speeches of the "free soul," taken in conjunction with all that has been said, do not convey an impression of heretical pantheism (cf. also Division III, chap. xviii). As to the accusation of Quietism, we may probably safely take the humorous comment of Richard Methley in his later translation of the passage descriptive of the last stages of the soul's journey (p. 293). We are told "There she prayeth not, all work is forbidden her, and she is in the simple being of the Deity." This is glossed as follows: "If the soul never did any work she would not have written this book for our edification; but it is to be understood, as I have said before, as being for a short time" (*i.e.*, when the soul is at prayer).

If we have seemed to stress the possible defects and dangers of our treatise, it has been done with a view to forestall the critic.

The reader will distinguish for himself its beauties and excellences, the happy originality of expression, the rare subtlety and depth of thought, and its spiritual elevation. It is not too much to say that, in this period, it is unique both in form and in content. None of the single English fourteenth-century spiritual treatises cover the whole ground which our author treats systematically, yet not with that arid, methodical precision that mars much of the later spiritual treatises. The descriptive treatment is foremost and successful. In England the translation must have fallen between Rolle's work and that of Julian of Norwich, and have been contemporary with the *Cloud* and Hilton. Throughout, the method of English mystics is unsystematic, descriptive, and more suggestive than doctrinal, except in the case of Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*. The *Cloud of Unknowing* comes nearest to the teaching of our author concerning prayer, but does not include in its range the variety of problems which underlie the teaching of the *Mirror* and establish its value as a guide to the interior life.

C. KIRCHBERGER.

In Annuntiatione B.M.V.
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TRANSLATOR'S PROLOGUE

To the worship and laud of the Trinity be this work begun and ended. Amen.

The Prologue

THIS book, the which is called *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, I, most unworthy creature and outcast of all other, many years gone wrote out of French into English after my simple learning,* in hope that, by the grace of God, it should profit those devout souls that shall read it. This was forsooth mine intent. But now I am stirred to labour it again new, for, because I am informed that some words thereof have been mistaken, therefore, if God will, I shall declare those words more openly; for though Love declare those points in the same book, it is but shortly spoken, and may be taken otherwise than it is meant, by them that read it suddenly and take no further heed; therefore [if] such words be twice opened it will be more of audience,†

* MS. "lewd kunning."

† Profitable, comprehensible.

and so, by grace of our Lord good God, it shall the more profit to the auditors. But with the first time and now, I have great dread to do it, for the book is of high divine matters and of high ghostly feelings, and cunningly and full dimly* it is spoken. And I am a creature right wretched and unable to any such work, poor and naked of ghostly fruits, darkened with sins and faults, environed and wrapped therein ofttimes, the which take away† my taste and my clear sight, [seeing] that I have little of ghostly understanding and less of the feelings of divine love. Therefore I may say the words of the prophet: *My teeth be not white to bite of this bread,* but [may] Almighty Jesu, God that feedeth the worm and giveth sight to the blind and wit to the unwitty, give me grace of wit and wisdom in all times wisely to govern myself, following alway his will, and [may he] send me clear sight and true understanding, well to do this work to his worship and pleasaunce; profit also and increase of grace to ghostly lovers, that be disposed and called‡ to this high election of the freedom of soul.

O ye that shall read this book, do ye as David saith in the psalter: *Gustate et videte,*§ that is to say *Taste and see.* But why trow

* MS. "mistily." † MS. "binemeth me."
‡ MS. "cleped." § Ps. xxxiv 8.

ye he said *Taste* first ere than he said *see*? For first a soul must taste ere it have very understanding and true sight of ghostly workings of divine love. O full naked and dark, dry and unsavoury be the speakings and writings of these high ghostly feelings of the love of God, to them that have not tasted the sweetness thereof. But when a soul is touched with grace—by which she has tasted somewhat of the sweetness of this divine fruition, and begins to wade and draweth the draughts to her-ward—then it savoureth the soul so sweetly that she desireth greatly to have of it more and more, and pursueth thereafter. And then the soul is glad and joyful to hear and to read of all thing that pertaineth to this high feeling of the workings of divine love, by nourishing and increasing her love and devotion to the will and pleasing of him that she loves, God, Christ Jesu.

Thus she entereth and walketh in the way of illumination, that she might be taught into the ghostly influences of the divine work of God, there to be drenched* in the high flood, and oned to God by ravishing of love, by which she is all one spirit with her spouse.

Therefore to these souls that be disposed to these feelings, Love hath of himself made this book in fulfilling of their desire, and often he layeth the nut and the kernel within

* *i.e.*, drowned.

AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

I CREATURE made of the Maker, by me that the maker hath made, [do make], of him this book. Why it is I know not, nor I keep not wit. For why? I owe it not;* it sufficeth me that it is [so], wherein I may know the divine wisdom. And in hope, I here them salute, by the love of peace of charity, in the High Trinity, that will warrant it,† seeing in them the witness of their living by record of clerks that have read this book.

The first was a Friar Minor of great name for life of perfection, men called him Frere John of Querayn; he said: "We send you this by these letters of love, receive it for courtesy, for Love prayeth it you: to the worship of God and of them that be made free of God, and to the profit of them that be not [so], but, God willing, yet may be."

He said soothly,‡ that this book is made by the Holy Ghost. And though all the clerks

* *i.e.*, "For why? it is not my business." *Cf.* St Augustine, *Confessions*, I, i-iii.

† *i.e.*, Who will give approval to the book.

‡ Truly; and so throughout.

of the world heard it, unless they understood it, that is to say, except they had high ghostly feelings and this same working, they shall not wit what it means. And he prayed for the love of God that it be wisely kept, and that but few should see it. And he said thus, that it was so high that himself might not understand it.

And after him a monk of the Cistercians' [Order] read it, that was named Dom Frank, Cantor of the Abbey of Villiers: and he said that it proved well by the Scriptures, that it is all truth, that this book saith.

And after him read it a Master of Divinity, that was named Master Godfrey of Fountayns: and he blamed it not, no more did the others; but he said thus, that he counselled not that many* should see it, and for this cause, because they might leave their own working† and follow this calling, to the which they should never come; and so they might deceive themselves. For it is made of a spirit so strong and cutting, that there be but few such or none. But nevertheless the soul comes never to divine usages‡ before

* MS. "fele."

† *i.e.*, their own way of spiritual living.

‡ Usages = habit and practices of devotion. Also a spiritual state. The contrast throughout is between the elementary practices and the higher ones, "Divine usages"; or it means the higher state imposed by God, "Divine usage."

she have [attained to] this usage, for all other human usages be under these usages; this is divine usage, and none other but this. For the peace of auditors was this proved.* And for your peace we say it [unto] you, for this seed should bear holy fruit in them that hear it and be worthy.

* *i.e.*, this approbation was obtained.

THE MIRROR OF SIMPLE SOULS

DIVISION I

CHAPTER I

AN EXHORTATION TO A SOUL TO ASCEND TO THE STAIRS OF PERFECTION, AND HOW THIS BOOK MAY BE UNDERSTOOD

O SOUL touched of God, dissevered from sin, in the first estate of grace, ascend by divine grace into the seventh estate of grace, where the soul hath her fullhead of perfection by divine fruition in life of peace. And among you, actives and contemplatives, that to this life may come, hear now some crumbs* of the clean love, of the noble love, and of the high love of the free souls, and how the Holy Ghost hath his sail in his ship.

"I pray you," saith Love for love, "that ye hear it by study of your inward subtle understanding with great diligence; else

* MS. "some mites."

they shall misunderstand it, all those that read it or hear it."

Now hearken by meekness among you, at the beginning of this, a little ensample of love of the world, and understand it into divine love.

There was in old time a lady, the which was a king's daughter of great worthiness and noble nature, that dwelt in a strange land. So it befell that this lady heard tell of the great courtesy and of the great largesse of King Alexander; and anon she loved him for his noble gentleness and for his high renown. But this lady was so far from this great lord, in whom she had laid her love, that she might neither have him nor see him. Wherefore she was full oft discomforted, for no love but this sufficed unto her, and when she saw [that] this far love—to her so nigh—was so far from her, she sought to comfort herself of him by imagination of some figure, that might bear the likeness of him that she loved, for whom she felt her heart full oft wounded. And then she had painted an image, that presented that king's semblance as nigh as she might, whom she loved, and by the sight of this image, with other usages, she was eased: and thus she appeased herself by the presentation of [that] love, whereby she was updrawn.

"Soothly," saith the soul that had this book written, "this I say for me: so fare I. I hear speak of a king of great might that for courtesy and great largesse is a noble Alexander. But so far is he from me and I from him," saith this soul, "that I cannot take comfort of myself: and to call* me he gave me this book, the which presenteth some usages of the love of himself. But nevertheless I dwell not in freedom of peace, though I have his image, but I am in a strange land, far from the peace, wherein these noble lovers of this lord dwell that be all perfect and pure, and by the gifts of this lord made free, with whom they dwell." Here shall I tell you how: not that we be lords, free of all, but that his love for us maketh us free.†

M. Ye auditors of this book, take keep of these words that say "not that we be lords free of all"; for whilst we be in this world, we may not be free of all, that is to say, we may not be departed continually from all spots of sin. But when a soul is drawn into herself from all outward things, so that love worketh in the soul—by which the soul is for a time departed from all

* MS. "clepe."

† MS. "not we lords free of all, but love of him for us."

sin, and is oned to God by union—then is the soul free, for that time of union, full little time [though] it is. And when she cometh down therefrom, then is she thrall, falling or fading. To this accordeth holy writ, where that it saith: *Septies in die cadit justus.** But this falling of the righteous is more merit than sin, because of the good will that standeth unbroken, and is oned to God. A creature may be inhabited by grace in freedom for ever; but to stand continually in freedom, without sin, it may not, for the instability of the sensuality that is always flitting. And therefore the falling is credited† to the sensuality, and not to the holy souls that perfectly have set their will in God, by which love maketh them free for the nobility of his work; therefore it may well be said, "not that we be lords free of all, but his love for us [maketh us free]." *N.*

So hear now a little for to show you how love may do all without any misdoing. Thus saith Love for us: that there be six beings of noble being; that creatures receive being, if they dispose them to all beings, ere they come to perfect being; as I shall tell you,

* Prov. xxiv 16.
† MS. "it is aretid the falling."

before this book, of the takings of love, end.*

* This very difficult sentence may perhaps be paraphrased somewhat as follows: "There be six [ways of] being [among] noble [modes of] being; that creatures receive being (*i.e.*, existence) before they come to perfect being, if they dispose themselves for all these modes of being; as I shall tell," etc. . . .

Takings = ideas, conceptions, ways, happenings, and so throughout.

DIVISION II

CHAPTER I

FOR WHOM THIS BOOK HAS BEEN MADE, AND OF THE PERFECTION THAT IS NEEDFUL TO ALL THEM THAT WILL BE SAVED

"AMONG you children of Holy Church," saith she, "for you have I made this book, that it should the more avail you [to] the life of perfection and the being of peace; to which creatures may come by virtue of perfect charity, to whom this gift is given of all the Trinity, which in this book ye hear devised, of the understanding of Love at question of Reason."

"Begin we here," saith Love, "at the commandments of Holy Church, by which every creature may in this book learn wisdom by the help of God, that commandeth us to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our virtue, and ourselves as we ought and our even-Christian* as ourselves. That we love him with all our heart, is that our thoughts be alway verily in him. And with all our soul, is that, upon our life, we

* *i.e.*, fellow-Christians.

should not say but truth. And with all our virtue, is that we should do all our works purely for him. And ourselves as we ought, is that, in doing of this we look not to our own profit, but to the perfect will of him, God, Christ Jesu. And our even-Christian as ourselves, is that we should not think, nor say, nor do against our even-Christian, otherwise than we would they did to us. These commandments be to all needful to salvation, of less life may none have grace.

CHAPTER II

OF THE COUNSEL OF PERFECTION AND OF THE LAUD OF CHARITY

A YOUNG man [there] was on a time that said to our Lord Jesu Christ that he had kept himself from the time he was a child unto that time. And our Lord answered him and said: *One thing yet faulteth thee. If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all thou hast and give it all to poor and then sue* me and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.*† This is counsel of perfection of virtues, who that holdeth well this teaching, he is in very charity.

Charity obeyeth to nothing that is made, but [only] to love. Charity has nothing of

* Sue = Fr. *suivez*, follow.

† Mark x 21.

her own, not so much that she will ask [for any]thing that is hers. Charity leaveth her own work and goeth to do others'. Charity asketh none allowance of creatures for [any] thing that she doth for them. Charity hath no shame, nor dread, nor dis-ease. She is so rightwise that she may not flit for nothing that [be]falleth.

Charity recketh not of [any]thing that is under the sun, all the world is her relief. Charity giveth to all, all that she has of value. Herself she withholdeth not, and oft promiseth thing that she hath not, for the great largesse of herself, in hope that he, that most giveth, most with him dwelleth. Charity is so wise a merchant that she winneth over all where others lose, and escapeth from perils where others perish, unto plenteous multiplying of that that is in love. Whoso hath perfect charity he is mortified in affection of [the] life of spirit,* by works of charity.

* *i.e.*, spiritual life in highest degree. Cf. Division XIV, chap. vi, and Division XIX, chap. ii.

DIVISION III

CHAPTER I

OF THE LIFE NAUGHTED, AND OF NINE POINTS OF THE SOUL THAT LIVETH IN THAT LIFE, AND HOW SHE WILLETH NOTHING THAT COMETH BY MEAN

ANOTHER life [there] is that we call peace of charity in life naughted. "Of this," saith Love, "we will speak in asking a soul. That none may her find. That saveth her by faith without work. That is alone [or all one] in love. That doth naught for God. Nor she leaveth naught for God. Nor no one may teach her. Nor none may give [to] her nor take away [from her]. Nor hath she naught of will. Ah, who shall give to this soul," saith Love, "this [thing] that is lacking to her, for it was never given nor never shall be given."

This soul hath six wings as have the seraphins, and also she willeth nothing that cometh by means.* This is the proper being of seraphins; there is no mean between their love and the divine love, they have alway

* *i.e.*, by any intermediary.

tidings without mean. So hath this soul that seeketh not divine science among the masters of the world, but the world and herself inwardly despiseth. Ah God, how great a difference [there is] between the gift given by the mean of the loved to the lover, in comparison with the gift given without mean, of the loved to the lover.

CHAPTER II

HOW THIS SOUL HATH SIX WINGS AS HAVE THE SERAPHIN, AND WHAT SHE DOTH WITH THEM

THIS book saith sooth of the soul, that saith she has six wings. With twain she covereth the face of our Lord; that is to say, the more that this soul hath of the knowing of the divine bounty, the more she knoweth that she knoweth not the mere wittance of a mote in regard of his bounty, the which is not comprehended but of himself. And with twain she covereth his feet; that is, that the more this soul hath knowing of the suffering that Jesu Christ suffered for us, the more perfectly she knoweth that she knoweth not, with regard to that [which] he suffered for us, the which is not known but of him. And with twain she flieth, and so dwelleth in understanding and in sitting. That is, that

all that she coveteth and loveth and prizeth, it is of the divine bounty. These be the wings that she flieth with. And [she] so dwelleth in standing, for she is alway in sight of God; and sitting, for she dwelleth alway in the divine will of God. Whereof should this soul have dread though she be in the world? And [though] the world, the flesh and the enemy, the fiend, and the four elements, the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth tormented her and despised her and devoured her, if it might so be, what might she lose, if God dwelled with her? Oh, is he not Almighty? Yes, without doubt, he is all might, all wisdom, and all goodness: our Father, our brother and our true friend; he is without beginning and shall be without ending, he is without comprehending but of himself, and without end was, is, and shall be, three persons and one God only. "Such is the Beloved of our souls," saith this soul.

CHAPTER III

HOW THIS SOUL TAKETH LEAVE OF VIRTUES

"THE soul of such love," saith Love himself, "may say thus to virtues: 'I take leave of you.' To which virtues this soul many a day hath been servant."

"I assent, Lady Love," saith this soul; "so [I] was then, but now, your courtesy has delivered me in this way out of this bondage."*

Therefore I say, "Virtues, I take leave of you for evermore. Now shall mine heart be more free and more in peace than it hath been before. I wot† well your service is too travailous. . . . Sometime I laid mine heart in you without any dissevering; ye wot well this; I was in all thing to you obedient. Oh I was then your servant, but now I am delivered out of your thraldom. Well, I wot, I laid all mine heart in you, so long I have endured great servitude in which I have suffered many grievous torments, and many pains endured. It is marvel that I am escaped with the life, but now I trouble not,‡ since it is thus, that I am departed out of your control, wherein many a night and day I have been, [so] that never was I free until now that I am departed from you; and therefore in peace I dwell."

M. Touching these words that this soul saith: "She taketh leave of virtues," Love declareth, but yet I am stirred here to say more to the matter, as thus: First: when

* MS. "daunger."

† Wot or wit or wist = know; wittance or witting = knowledge.

‡ MS. "make no fors."

a soul giveth herself to perfection she laboureth busily day and night to get virtues, by counsel of reason, and striveth with vices at every thought, at every word and deed that she perceiveth cometh of them, and busily searcheth [out] vices, them to destroy. Thus the virtues be mistresses, and every virtue maketh her to war with its contrary, the which be vices. Many sharp pains and bitterness of conscience feeleth this soul in this war. And these pains and passions be not only in the exercise of the spirit, by putting away vices in getting of virtues, but they be also of bodily exercise by commandments of virtues and by counsel of reason; to fast and wake, and to do penance in many sundry wises, and forsake all her own pleasures and all lusts and likings; and in the beginning of all this, it is ofttimes full sharp and full hard. But this she did all by commandments of virtues that were first ladies and mistresses of this soul. And she was subject to them all the while that she felt this pain and war within herself. But so long one may bite on the bitter bark of the nut, that at last one shall come to the sweet kernel.

Right so, ghostly to understand, it fareth by those souls that be come to peace. They have so long striven with

vices and wrought by virtues, that they may come to the nut kernel, that is, to the love of God, which is sweetness. And when the soul hath deeply tasted this love, so that this love of God worketh and hath his usages* in her soul, then the soul is wondrous light and gladsome, and that is no marvel, for the sweet taste of love driveth out from the soul all pains and bitterness and all doubts and dreads. Then is she mistress and lady over the virtues, for she hath them all within herself, ready at her commandment, without bitterness or painfulness of feeling to the soul. And then this soul taketh leave of virtues [in respect] of the thraldom and painful travail of them that she had before, and now she is lady and sovereign, and they be subjects. When the soul wrought by commandment of virtues, then the virtues were ladies and she subject. And now that the virtues work by commandment of this soul, they be subjects to this soul, and this soul is lady over virtues. And thus it is meant that this soul taketh leave of virtues.† *N.*

* *i.e.*, " his habitual working."

† See note at end of text, *infra*, p. 299.

CHAPTER IV

OF CERTAIN THINGS THAT THE SOUL RECKETH NOT OF, AND HOW SHE IS LOST IN THE RIGHT HIGH BY PLENTY OF KNOWING AND BECOME NAUGHT IN HER UNDERSTANDING, AND WHERETO SHE IS COME BY THAT

"THIS soul," saith Love, "recketh not of shame nor of worship, nor of poverty nor of riches, nor of ease nor of dis-ease, nor of love nor of hate, nor of hell nor of paradise."

"O Love, for God," saith Reason, "what is this to say that ye have said?" "What is this to say?" saith Love. "Wot they and none other to whom God hath given the understanding: for no Scripture teacheth it, nor may man's wit comprehend it, nor travail of creatures nor desert may not reach it. But it is a gift given of the Right High, in whom this creature is lost by plenty of knowing, and becometh naught in her understanding."

M. O these words seem full strange to the readers, that say the soul is lost in the Right High by plenty of knowing, and becometh naught in her understanding. And not only these words but also many more other words that be written before and after

seem fable or error, or hard to understand. But for the love of God, ye readers, judge not too soon, for I am certain that whoso readeth over this book by good avisement twice or thrice and is disposed to the same feelings, they shall understand it well enough. And though they be not disposed to those feelings, yet they shall think it is all well said. But whoso taketh the naked words of Scriptures* and leaveth the meaning, he may lightly err. *N.*

And this soul that is become naught, she wotteth all and she wotteth naught, and she willeth all and she willeth naught.

" Ah, what may this be, Lady Love," saith Reason, " that this soul may thus will, as this writing saith, that before hath said that she hath no will ?"

" O Reason," saith Love, " it is not her will, this that she willeth, but it is the will of God, all that she willeth; for this soul taketh not the lead in love, that thus should make her will by any desire, but Love leadeth in her [which] her will hath taken, and doth his will of her."

Now worketh love in her without her, so that no dis-ease with her may dwell.

* *i.e.*, writings generally.

CHAPTER V

HOW A SOUL THAT IS MORTIFIED OF ALL OUTWARD DESIRES CAN NO MORE SPEAK OF GOD; AND HOW IT IS MEANT, THAT THIS SOUL HATH TAKEN LEAVE OF VIRTUES, AND HOW SUCH SOULS BE BECOME FREE; AND WHAT THE GREATEST TORMENT IS THAT A CREATURE MAY SUFFER IN THIS LIFE

"THIS soul," saith Love, "can no more speak of God, for she is naughted of all outward desire and of all the affections of the spirit, so that [which] this soul doth, she doth it by usage of good custom, or by commandments of Holy Church, without any desire; for will is dead which gave her desire.

"Ah Love," saith Reason, that understandeth eagerly and leaveth the sweetness, "what wonder is it, though this soul be deprived of the feelings of grace, of desire, of spirit, since she hath taken leave of virtues, which manners giveth to all good souls? without which virtues none may be saved, nor come to the life of perfection, and who hath them may not be deceived; and this soul hath taken leave of them; is she out of her wit that speaketh thus?"

"Oh without fail, nay," saith Love, "for

this soul hath better [than] all virtues, and more than any other creature. But she hath not the usages of them, for she is not *with* them* as she was wont. No, and God will," saith Love, "she hath been servant long enough, now [is she] to become free from this time forward."

"Eh, Love," saith Reason, "when was she servant?"

"When she took the lead† in love and in the obedience of thee and of other virtues," saith Love. "These souls," saith Love, "that such be, have so long led in love and in obedience of virtues, that they be become free."

"And when be these souls become free?" saith Reason.

"When love dwelleth and leadeth in them, and virtues serve them without any understanding or painfulness in these souls."

* "Is not with them" seems to mean, "is not absorbed in eager pursuit of them," or concerned regarding her state in respect of virtue, as above. It is the eagerness which is blamed. The use of this phrase *with her*, or *for her*, denotes throughout a self-centred activity, and is contrasted with true selflessness by the term *without her*.

† MS. "ledid." Throughout "leading" or "meuing"—*i.e.*, moving—is used to express an impulsive self-direction of the soul even in good directions. The ideal is when "Love leadeth in her," or God is said to "move" the soul into himself, etc.

"Soothly, Love," saith Reason, "these souls that thus become free, they have many a day known what control can do. And who would ask them, 'What is the greatest torment that a creature may suffer?' they would say, 'It is to take the lead in love and in obedience of virtues'; for it behoveth them give to virtues all that they ask, whatever it cost to nature; and they ask worship, honour, heart, body, life. This is to say, that the soul that hath given them all this, and nothing hath left to comfort nature with (that hardly the rightful man shall be saved) would then thus become sorrowful, be in hell and tormented unto the day of judgement, so that she might be in certainty, then to be saved. This is sooth," saith Love, "under such control live they, that these virtues have power over."

"But these souls that I speak of, have the virtues put at point;* for they do nothing for them, but the virtues do all that the souls will, without control or withstanding, for these souls be their mistresses."

* *i.e.*, made perfect.

CHAPTER VI

HOW THESE FREE SOULS HAVE NOTHING OF WILL, AND WHAT THEIR CONTINUAL USAGE IS

WHO that asketh these free souls sure and peaceable, if they would be in purgatory? they say "Nay." If they would [while yet] living be certified of their salvation? they say "Nay." If they would be in Paradise? they say "Nay." "Eh! what would they?" They have nothing of will to will this, and, if they did will it, they would descend from love. For he that is, hath their will, [and he] knoweth what is good for them, and that sufficeth them without knowing or being sure. "These souls," saith love, "live of knowing of love and of hearing." This is [the] continual usage of these souls without departing them [therefrom]: for knowing and love and magnifying dwelleth in them. These souls, that be such, cannot find the good nor the evil, nor have knowing of themselves to make judgement whether they be converted or perverted.

CHAPTER VII

HOW LOVE TAKETH ONE OF THESE SOULS FOR ALL, FOR TO SPEAK MORE READILY, AND OF CERTAIN WORKS OF VIRTUE THAT THIS SOUL HATH NO DESIRE TO; AND OF WHAT THE [MOST] PERFECT GIFT IS THAT GOD GIVETH TO CREATURES

"Of these souls," saith Love, "we will take one for all, to speak the more readily. This soul desireth not despite nor poverty, nor tribulation nor dis-ease, nor masses nor sermons, nor fastings nor orisons, and she giveth to nature all that she asketh without grudging of conscience."

M. This is to say, that this soul is oned with God, and, whiles she standeth in that union, she hath no will, nor work, nor no desire, she thinketh of nothing that is beneath that [union]. Also, another understanding there is, and that is this. First, when creatures give themselves to perfection, they set all their desire and all their purpose* in these points aforesaid, and all their labour by fervour of love, in which they work and [take the] lead. They desire for God's sake, despite,†

* MS. "entencions." † *i.e.*, contempt.

poverty, tribulation, dis-ease, masses and sermons, fastings and orisons, and [they] take from nature all her asking, in refusing all thing that is lusty and pleasant to the flesh; for by this way, and by sharp contrition, souls must go, before they come to these divine usages. And when they have tasted of these sweet draughts of heavenly influences, it savoureth them so well that they attend fully thereto. And then love, of her courtesy, worketh in these souls and maketh them cease from that first labour; [yet] not from the deed,* to leave the work undone for evermore, but from that manner of labour in doing of it, as thus. When Love worketh in the soul and holdeth in her the sparkles of his bright beams, she understandeth well by clarity of that light and by sweetness of that liquor that she hath drunk, [that] the work of love is more worth and draweth more to the union in God than doth her own work. Therefore she taketh it as for the most worthy and setteth by that principally, so that all their† attendance and all their business that was before in their other outward works is now set to

* *i.e.*, but not cease from the acts of virtue.

† The change from the singular to the plural pronoun is in the MS.; the reference is from the one soul to that "class of souls."

follow this. But yet also she doth the other, as by usage of good custom, as Love saith, in this book, " that by usage of good custom this soul doth these outward works." But she doth it without desire and without that kind of usage that she had before, in labouring by outward impulses;* but fully she attendeth in all that she may to the usages of love, which be all divine and upward. So whatever this creature doth, it is oned to Love, [so] that it is Love that doth it. And thus she suffereth Love to work in her; therefore this, that Love saith, that these souls " desire not masses nor sermons, fastings nor orisons," it should not be so taken that they should leave [them] undone. He were purblind that would take it in this wise; but all such words in this book must be taken ghostly and divinely. For these souls naught† themselves so by very

* MS. " Foreign wills " = Commands or impulses that seem to come to her from without herself (foreign). With this is, perhaps, combined the sense that the soul labours according to the interior commands that urge her to act contrary to herself and her natural inclinations or wills—*i.e.*, foreign, non-natural wills or commands. But she attends to the practices of love, which are interior and Godward, not concerned with outward things.

† Deny, humble, make themselves nothing, annihilate themselves, and so throughout the text.

meekness, that they make themselves as no-one, for sin is no-thing, and they hold themselves but sin; therefore in their own beholding they do . . . naught, but God doth in them his works. Also these souls have no proper will* nor desire, they have wholly planted it in God, so that they may nothing will nor desire, but God willeth in them and maketh them to do his will. Thus they do nothing as in their own sight and judgement, but God doth all thing that good is. And she giveth to nature all her asking without grudging of conscience. Now God forbid that any be so fleshly [as] to think that this should mean, to give to nature any lust that draweth to fleshly sin, for God knoweth well that it is not so meant. For sin must be had in conscience,† will a man or nil he so, in the time or after. This may every creature well wit that hath any wit and discretion; for this I say of truth, that these souls that be such as this book deviseth, they be so mortified from such wretchedness and so enlumined with grace, and so arrayed with the love of God, that it quencheth all fleshly sin in them, and driveth mightily down all bodily and ghostly temptations. Thus Love, that is,

* *i.e.*, no will of their own.

† See note at end of text, *infra*, p. 300.

God the Holy Ghost, worketh graciously in these persons, in whom he holdeth his school and arrayeth them so with fair flowers of his high noblesse, that there may no spots nor blemishes* in them abide. *N.*

She hath no care† for anything that she lacketh, except at the time when she is in want. This burden of heaviness may no one lose except he be an innocent.

"Before God!" saith Reason, "what is this to say?"

"I answered thee, here before," saith Love, "and still I tell thee that all the masters of natural wit, nor all the masters of scriptures, nor all those that take the lead in love and in obedience of virtues, understand it not; thereof be right sure," saith Love, "but those only, without more, whom fine love so leadeth."‡

"But whoso found such souls, they could tell thee the truth an they would; but I am not in pledge that men may understand it, except only those whom fine love leadeth. This gift is given," saith Love, "sometime in a moment of time. Whoever hath it [let him] keep it, for it is the most perfect gift

* MS. "dragges."
† *i.e.*, she is not troubled, anxious.
‡ MS. "demeneth."

that God giveth to creatures. This is a scholar of divinity; she sitteth in the valley of meekness and in the plain of truth and in the mountain of love, there she resteth her."

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE PROPER NAMES OF THIS SOUL, AND HOW THE TRUE CONTEMPLATIVE SHOULD HAVE NO DESIRE

"Ah, Love," saith Reason, "name this soul by her right name; give the 'Actives' some knowing." And Love nameth her by thus many names. (1) The right marvellous. (2) And the unknown. (3) The most innocent of the daughters of Jerusalem. (4) She on whom all Holy Church is founded. (5) The [en]lightened of knowing. (6) The worshipped of love. (7) The union of hearing. (8) The naught in all things for meekness. (9) The peaceable in divine being, by divine will, by nothing willing of will. (10) The fulfilled. (11) And [she who is] called without fail by the divine goodness, of the work of the Trinity. (12) Forgettelle is her name.

M. Forgettelle is her name, for it is her manner much to comprehend and soon to forget. She comprehendeth much when she beholdeth God, how worthy and

glorious he is, and how powerful he is in all his works.

She seeth well then, that God by his high majesty, he is in all. Furthermore, she seeth how good and merciful, benign and meek he is in all things, and in this beholding full often love cometh to her with his ravishing darts and woundeth her so sweetly that she forgetteth all that she afore saw and wist. Also, she comprehendeth much, what time she is oned to God; then in a moment of time she forgetteth herself and all other thing that was afore thought. Thus she comprehendeth much and soon forgetteth. *N.*

These twelve names Love giveth her. "Now soothly this is right," saith Pure Courtesy, "that these be her right names."

"Ah, Love," saith Reason, "you have named this soul by many names, so that the Actives may have some knowing, at the least by hearing of the right noble names [by which] you have named her. Now I pray you, for the 'Contemplatives,'" saith Reason, "who always desire to increase in knowledge of the divine bounty."

"They be ill constrained, Reason,"* saith Love, "to that which thou sayest."

* *i.e.*, they will be with difficulty persuaded to that which Reason, etc.

M. As who saith, the true contemplatives should have no desire, but plant it all in divine will of God, and knit their wills wholly in him to his will, and have no proper will nor desire, but will perfectly the divine will of God. For by right, the contemplatives should pass the state of scholars, as masters of divinity be passed schools. *N.*

CHAPTER IX

OF THE FIRST POINT THAT IS SPOKEN OF AFORE, OF THE SOUL IN LIFE NAUGHTED; HOW NONE MAY FIND HER, AND HOW THIS IS WORTHY AND OF TRUE MEEKNESS

" Ah, Lady Love," saith Reason, " expound now the nine points, for your courtesy, to the desirous contemplatives that be and dwell ever in desire of love, which nine points you rehearsed here afore; of her that fine love asketh, in whom love dwelleth and is set in life naughted, by which the soul is molten in pure love."

" The first point, Love," saith Reason, " is that which you have said; that none may find her."

" It is truth," saith Love, " this is, that

this soul knows of herself but one thing, and that is [that she is] the root of all evils and the abundance of all sins without number, without weight and without measure, and sin is naught and less than naught, and a hundred of horrible faults, under less than naught. And by this understanding is she [made] naught with regard to that which is of her [nature].* Then may not this soul here be found, for this soul is so naughted by meekness that it seemeth [to] her there is no creature that ever sinned that is so worthy to have torment and confusion without end, as she, by her true judgement, if God would take vengeance of one of a thousand of her faults. This meekness is true meekness and profit in a soul naughted, and none other but this.

CHAPTER X

OF THE SECOND POINT, THAT IS, HOW THIS SOUL SAVETH HER BY FAITH WITHOUT WORKS, AND HOW THIS IS UNDERSTOOD

THE second point is that this soul saveth her by faith without works.

"Ah, Love," saith Reason, "what is this to say?"

* MS. "as of that that is of her:" possibly for, "with regard to all that is of her nature."

"That is," saith Love, "that such a soul that is naughted, hath so great inward knowing, by the virtue of faith, that she is thus called in her inwardness to sustain that which faith hath ministered to her of the might of the Father, of the wisdom of the Son, and of the goodness of the Holy Ghost. [So] that nothing wrought may dwell in her thought but passeth swiftly, for the other calling hath taken the house of this naughted soul. This soul can no more work. Oh soothly she hath enough of faith without work to believe that God is good, without comprehending. Thus she saveth her by faith without work, for faith surmounteth all works [by the] witness of Love herself.

M. Holy Writ saith, *Unde sapiens justus ex fide vivit.** Comprehend! This is to say, that righteous man liveth of faith and so do these souls.

But this, "that they save themselves by faith without works," and "that they can no more work," it is not meant that they cease from all good works for evermore, and never do any work, but sit in sloth and idleness of soul and body; for those who take it so, they misunderstand it; but it is thus. God is enhabited in them† and worketh in them, and these souls

* Hab. ii 4. † *i.e.*, God inhabits them.

suffer him [to] work his divine works in them. What this work is, and how it is, love showeth it in this book; and whatever the bodies of these souls do of outward* deeds, the souls that be thus high set, take not so great regard to these works that they save themselves thereby, but only trust to the goodness of God, and so they save them by faith, and believe not nor trust not in their own works, but in all, in God's goodness.† *N.*

CHAPTER XI

HOW THIS SOUL IS ALONE IN LOVE, AND HOW SHE DOETH NAUGHT FOR GOD, NOR SHE LEAVETH NAUGHT FOR GOD, AND HOW THESE THREE POINTS BE MEANT

"THE third point," saith Love, "is this. That she is alone in love." This is that she hath no comfort nor affection, nor hope in [any] creature that is made, in heaven or in earth, but only in the goodness of God. "This soul," saith Love, "beggeth‡ not of

* MS. "foreign."

† In addition to M. N.'s interpretation of the passage, it may be remembered that the author probably referred to the mode of prayer of those souls, as will appear later. Cf. also Division XX, chap. ii.

‡ Beggeth—*i.e.*, seeketh, craveth, desireth.

creatures: this is the phœnix that is alone in love, so that of him she remembereth."

"The fourth point is this, that this soul doeth naught for God."

"Ah, for God," saith Reason, "what is this to say?"

"This is," saith Love, "that God maketh no to-do about his work, and this soul then hath not 'to-do' about that [with which] God hath not 'to-do.' Nor of herself she recketh not, but God considereth her, and him she loveth so much that herself she cannot love."

"This soul," saith Love, "hath so great faith in God, that she hath no dread to be poor, for as much as her love is rich; for faith teacheth her that right so as she hopeth of God, right such shall she find him, and thus hopeth she.

"The fifth point is this, that this soul leaveth not, for God, to do anything that she would do."

"Ah, Love," saith Reason, "what is this to say?"

"This is," saith Love, "that this soul may not do [aught] but the will of God, nor may she will aught else; and for this she leaveth naught for God, for she hath not in her inward thought anything that is against God, and for this cause she leaveth naught for God."

CHAPTER XII

HOW NONE MAY TEACH THIS SOUL, NOR NONE MAY ROB HER, AND HOW THIS SIXTH POINT IS UNDERSTOOD

"THE sixth point is this, that none may her teach."

"Now for God," saith Reason, "Lady Soul, say what this is!"

"This is to say," saith Love, "that this soul is of such great knowledge that though she had all the knowing of all the creatures that ever had been and shall be, she would think it naught, as in regard of* that which she loveth, which was never known nor never shall be known. She loveth more that which is in God, which was never given nor never shall be given, than she doth that which she hath and which she shall have. For though she had all the knowing that all the creatures have that be and shall be, "It is naught," saith this soul, "as compared to that which is, which may not be said."

"The seventh point," saith Love, "is this, that men may not rob her. Oh! what might they rob her of? for though she were robbed of worship, honour, friends, heart, body, and life, yet would they not rob her

* *i.e.*, in comparison with.

of anything if God with her dwell; then may no creature rob her of aught, by no strength that they have."

CHAPTER XIII

OF THE EIGHTH POINT, THAT IS, THAT NONE MAY GIVE TO HER, AND HOW THIS IS UNDERSTOOD, AND OF THE INEFFABLENESS OF GOD

"THE eighth point, Reason," saith Love, "is that men may give her naught." "Give," saith Love, "what might they give her? Though they gave her all that ever was given and shall be given, it would be naught compared with that which she loveth and shall love."

"But God himself, Lady Love," saith this soul, "loveth in me and shall love."

"Save your reverence, that wot I not. We say this," saith she, "for the auditors of this book, that God loveth better [where there is] the more of himself [in a man], than [where there is] less of himself."*

"Oh, there is no less of himself," saith this soul, "there is but all, and this I may say, and soothly say."

"I say," saith Love, "that though this

* MS. "God loveth better the more of him in him, than the less of himself."

soul had all the knowing, the love, and the hearing, that ever was given or ever shall be given, of the divine Trinity, it should be naught in comparison with that which she loveth and shall love; nor this love may not be attained nor reached."

"Oh, without fail no, sweet Love," saith this soul, "[even with regard to] the least point of my love, without 'more'; for there is none other God but he that none may know, which may not be known. No soothly! No, without fail, no!" saith she, "he only is my God, of whom none can say one word, nor all those of paradise one only point attain nor understand, for all the knowing that they have of him. And in this 'more' to all fulfilling, is enclosed," saith she, "the sovereign [im]mortality of the love of my spirit.* For that is all the glory of the love of my soul and shall be without end. And all those that never understood this point be full little to her," saith this soul, "in comparison with the 'more great' whereof we speak not. I would speak, and I know not what to say, but nevertheless, Lady

* And in the perfect fulfilment of this "more" —*i.e.*, in God, Himself, in the heavenly will, the supreme immortality of the love of my spirit is enclosed, pledged, fulfilled. That is, the soul finds her highest capacity fulfilled in the contemplation of God, who is the "more," etc.

Love," saith she, " my love is of such a kind that I love better to hear gabbing* of you, than if men told me nothing of you.

"Without fail I do so, for all that I say of your goodness, is but gabbing; but this gabbing is of you forgiveable. Lord, they fail to say well of you, that alway speak of you, and never say nothing of your goodness. This I tell you, right of myself; I cease not to say [this] of you to that which men say to me [being] questioned and in [my] thoughts.

"Soothly, whatever men say, neither they nor I can say aught of your goodness, but the more I hear said of you, the more I am abashed. Then [*i.e.*, for] this is a great villainy that men do me, to wit, that men should tell me something of the goodness of you. Yet they be deceived that trust in it, for I am certain that men cannot speak [rightly]. And if God will, I shall no more be deceived; I will no more hear gab of your divine goodness."†

* Gabbing—*i.e.*, boasting, fine talk. A warning against spiritual extravagances.

† The soul protests against the exaggerated " spiritual talk " of others, urging first that these speak too little of God's *goodness*, and saying that this is the point she emphasizes whenever men question her, or when she thinks of God. Though, indeed, all that they or she can say is a folly which humbles her more deeply, and she perceives again that "talk about God" is nothing but waste of

M. This is an usage in Love's game, by which these souls have then so clear sight in divine beholdings, that it seemeth to them that all which they or others say, it is but gabbings in respect of the high goodness and great nobleness that is in God; which may not be known except by himself for the magnitude of greatness. Therefore they think that neither they nor others can nor may speak [thereof]; but all is gabbing, for as much as they may not reach to a point of the fullhead of soothfastness. *N.*

" I will no more," saith this soul to God, " hear gab of your divine goodness, if I have life to fulfil the takings* of this book, of which Love is mistress, that biddeth me that I determine all my takings, for as oft as I ask anything for myself of Love, by that, shall I be ' with ' me in life of spirit in the shadow of the sun, where may not be seen the subtle imaginations of the drawings of the divine love of the divine generation."

" Oh, what say I ?" saith this soul, " all it is naught though I all had, in comparison with that I love in him, which he giveth to none but himself, which he must withhold

time. She resolves to do so no more, and trust wholly to intimate converse with God.

* *i.e.*, ideas; Lat. MS. *accepciones*.

for his divine righteousness. Then, say I, that this is truth, that men may give me naught, whatever thing that it may be."

"And this complaint, Reason," saith the soul, "that ye hear me complain, it is mine all and my best in well-understanding. Oh, what a sweet meaning [is this]; for God's love understand it all! for Paradise is no other thing than this same, to understand."

CHAPTER XIV

OF THE NINTH POINT, THAT IS, HOW THIS SOUL HATH NO WILL, AND HOW THIS [IS] MEANT

"THE ninth point," saith Love, "is this, that this soul hath no will."*

Oh, without fail, no; for all that she willeth in consenting of will, it is that which God wills that she should will. "And that willeth she," saith Love, "in order to fulfil God's will, and not her own. And this may she not will [in] her [own strength], but it is the will of God that willeth in her, so that this soul hath no will but the will of God, [which] maketh her will all that she ought to will."

Hear and understand, ye auditors of this book,† the true understanding of these words,

* For a note on willing and not willing, see Introduction.

† This passage reads like an *M.N.* gloss, though it is not so marked.

and what that is that this book saith, in so many places: that a soul naughted hath naught of will, nor naught may have, nor naught may will. And in this the divine will perfectly is fulfilled. Nor may the soul have her full sufficiency of divine love, nor [may] divine love [have it] of the soul, until such time as the soul be in God and God in the soul, of him, by him, in this being, by divine [indwelling], and then the soul hath all her sufficiency.

"Soothly, yea," saith the understanding of Reason, "but it seemeth that the ninth point saith all the contrary, which saith that the soul naughted willeth naught with regard to that which she would will; nor may she have that which God wills that she will.* And that her will is naught in respect to her [own] sufficiency, which never was given her, nor never shall be given her."

"From this," saith Reason, "I understand that the soul willeth a will, and God willeth that she will a will, which she may not have; and by this she suffers loss, and hath not satisfaction."†

* This may mean that she has "no will"—*i.e.*, she is indifferent concerning her own satisfaction, or that her will is made naught—*i.e.*, she is denied her satisfaction.

† MS. "and this hase of failance and not of suffisance."

"It seemeth, Lady Love," saith the understanding of Reason, "that this ninth point maketh me thus to understand the saying of this book, which saith forsooth that the free soul hath no will, nor naught may have, nor naught may will, nor the divine Trinity will not that she have; and this book saith that she hath in all things, by divine love, full sufficiency."

"O understanding of Reason," saith this naughted soul, "how rude thou art! Thou takest the shell or the chaff, and leavest the kernel or the grain. Thine understanding is so low that thou mayest not reach so high as behoveth them that well would have the understanding of the Being that we speak of. But the understanding of divine love, that taketh the lead in a naughted soul which is made free, understandeth it without erring, for she is [of] the same [nature]."

"O thou understanding of Reason," saith the highness of the understanding of Love, "understand now the rudeness of thy misunderstanding. If this naughted lady willeth the will of God, the more that she willeth it, the more she would will it; and that may she not, on account of the littleness of [the] creature, for God withholdeth the greatness of his divine righteousness. But God willeth that she will this, and that she have such [a] will. For such [a] will is [a]

divine will, and this divine will giveth Being to free creatures. For the divine will that God maketh to will in them, draweth in them beams of divine knowings and the feelings of divine love and the union of divine magnificence and laud. And then," saith Love, to this creature, " how may this soul will, when clear knowledge knoweth that there is a Being among the Beings, which is most noble of all Beings, which creatures may not have unless they have it by the 'not-willing'?"*

" Now," saith Love, " hath Reason heard the answer of his questions, save where it saith, that the free soul hath in her a lack of sufficiency. But this I say to her, whereby to will the divine will: soothly, the more that she willeth it, the less hath such [a] will of this her [own] satisfaction, and this same [will] is the only [pure] will of God and the soul's glory."

CHAPTER XV

OF THE PERFECTION OF THEM THAT LIVE AFTER THE COUNSEL OF REASON; AND OF THE PERFECTION OF THESE SOULS THAT FINE LOVE LEADETH

" Ah, Love," saith Reason, " you have done our prayer for the actives and the con-

* See Introduction.

templatives, and now I pray you to declare and expound to the common people, these double* words that be hard to understand, to their understanding; [so] that some, by adventure, may come to this Being, by which this book may show to all the very light of truth and the perfection of charity of those who preciously be called and chosen of God and sovereignly be loved of him."

"Reason," saith Love to this, "I will answer for the profit of those for whom thou makest to us this piteous request. Reason," saith Love, "where be these double words that thou prayest me to discuss for the auditors of this book, who live in 'will and in desire,'† the which book we call *The Mirror of Simple Souls*?"

"To this I answer, Lady Love," saith Reason, "for this book saith great marvels of this soul, which saith she recketh not of shame nor of worship, nor of poverty nor of riches, nor of ease nor of dis-ease, nor of love nor of hate, nor of hell nor of paradise. And also it saith, that this soul hath all, and she hath naught; she wotteth all and she wotteth naught; she willeth all and she

* *i.e.*, ambiguous, difficult.

† *i.e.*, whose spiritual life is still governed by "will and desire." Cf. teaching of St John of the Cross.

willeth naught. Nor desireth she," saith Reason, " despite nor poverty, nor no martyrdom nor tribulations, nor sermons, nor fastings, nor orisons. And she giveth to nature all his askings without grudging of conscience. Without fail, Love," saith Reason, " this may none understand by *mine* understanding, unless they learn it of you by *your* teaching; for my counsel is—as the best that I can counsel—that men [should] desire despite and poverty and all manner of tribulation, masses and sermons, fastings and orisons. And that men [should] remain in dread of all manner of loves whatever they be, on account of perils that might happen; and that men [should] desire Paradise sovereignly, and also that men should fear of going to hell, and that they refuse all manner of worships* and temporal things, and all kinds of ease, taking away from nature all that she asketh, save only that without which they might not live, after the ensample of suffering that our Lord Jesu Christ suffered. This is the best that I can counsel," saith Reason, " to all those that live under mine obedience. And therefore I say that none shall understand this book [according to] mine understanding, unless they understood it by the virtue of Faith, and by the strength of Love, that be

* *i.e.*, honours.

my mistresses, for I am obedient to them in all. And yet," saith Reason, " thus much I say, that who hath these two cords in his heart—the light of faith and the strength of love—he hath leave to do what pleaseth him, [as] witness God himself, who saith to the soul: 'Love! love! and do what ye will.' "

" Reason," saith Love, " thou art full wise concerning things that appertain to thee. Thou wouldest have answers to these words aforesaid, and thou askest what it is? It is well asked, and," saith Love, " I will answer thee to all thy askings."

" Reason," saith Love, " I certify thee that these souls, whom Fine Love leadeth, they have as lief* shame as worship, and worship as shame; and poverty as riches and riches as poverty; and torments of God and of his creatures, as comforts of God and of his creatures; and to be hated as loved and loved as hated; and hell as paradise and paradise as hell; and little estate as great, and great estate as little. This is to say, in sooth, that they neither will nor not-will, any of these prosperities nor any of these adversities; for these souls have no will but [for the] thing that God willeth in them. And the divine will calleth not these perfect†

* *i.e.*, they are as willing to have.
† MS. " surmounted."

creatures, with such encumbrances* as we have here devised. I have said before," saith Love, " that these souls have as lief [to endure] all manner of adversities of heart, for body and for soul, as prosperities, and prosperities as adversities. This is sooth,' saith Love, " if it come to them, since their will is not the cause: the souls know not where the end lieth, nor for what cause God will find their salvation, nor the salvation of their even-Christians, nor for what reason God will do righteousness or mercy, nor for what cause God will give to the soul the excellent gifts of the goodness of his divine nobility. And for this reason, the free soul hath no will to will nor not-to-will, but only to will the will of God, and suffer in peace his divine ordinance."

* " Encumbrances "—*i.e.*, hindrances, spiritual unquietness. The divine will does not call these exalted souls (not perfect yet, but having vocations to perfection) *with* (*i.e.*, does not call them onwards in the way of union), *if* they retain these encumbrances of desire and anxiety.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW THIS SOUL HATH ALL AND SHE HATH NAUGHT; SHE WOT ALL AND SHE WOT NAUGHT; AND OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR; AND HOW THIS SOUL WILLETH ALL AND SHE WILLETH NAUGHT, AND HOW THIS IS UNDERSTOOD

"YET Love," saith Reason, "stand by my question, for this book saith, that this soul hath all and she hath naught."

"It is sooth," saith Love, "for this soul hath God in her by divine grace, and whoso hath God, hath all. And it saith, that she hath naught, for all that this soul hath of God in her by divine grace, it seemeth [to] her naught. Nor is it more in comparison with that which she loveth, which is in him; which he giveth to none but to himself.* And by

* The soul's possession of God in herself seems to her nothing compared with the fulness of the transcendent life of the Trinity as it exists in itself. It is this life of God in himself which is the object of her worship and love, and her treasure being thus hid with Christ in God, even the possession of God within herself becomes a secondary "love."

It is because the soul's very Being is thus focussed in the divine life that she can be indifferent to all lower material and spiritual "desires and wills"; indifferent as to whether pain or pleasure, mortification or prosperity befall her.

this understanding this soul hath all and she hath naught, she knoweth all and she knoweth naught. She knoweth all," saith Love, " by virtue of faith, that God is Almighty, all wisdom and all goodness, and that God the Father hath done the work of the Incarnation and the Son also, and the Holy Ghost also. So that God the Father hath joined and oned human nature to the person of God the Son, and God the Son hath joined it to the person of himself, and God the Holy Ghost hath joined it to the person of God the Son. So that God the Father hath in him only one nature, [a] nature divine; and God the Son hath in him two natures, that same nature divine, and [a human] nature of soul and body. And God the Holy Ghost hath in him this same nature divine. This to believe, this to say, and this to think, is true contemplation. He is one might, one wisdom, and one will: and only one God in three persons, and three persons in one God. This God is over all in his divine nature, but the manhood is in heaven glorified and joined to the divine person of the Son, and [beside that] only in the holy Sacrament of the Altar. This divinity and this manhood, true Christians receive when the holy Sacrament is ministered unto them. How truly this manhood dwelleth with them, Faith teacheth it, and this clerks know."

"And we shall tell you," saith the Light of Faith, "how this humanity dwelleth with them, as thus by [a] similitude: Take this sacrament and put it in a mortar with other things, and pound this sacrament so that you may not see nor feel [aught] of the person that you have put in. I tell you forsooth," saith Faith, "that it *is* not now, since it may not be seen nor felt." To this you may answer, "Where has it then gone?" "Nay," saith Truth, "it was, and now it is not, understand wholly of the humanity. Then may ye ask if it went as it came. I tell you," saith Truth, "that the humanity of Christ Jesu neither cometh nor goeth." "And how may this be?" saith Temptation.

M. It is thus that the manhood of Christ Jesu never cometh nor goeth. But by his divinity and by his divine might, and by the virtue of his holy word, the host turneth into his precious body of flesh and blood.

His glorious body that is in heaven and knit to the divine person of the Son, cometh not down into the host, but the host turneth into him, as it is aforesaid. So that it is verily his own precious body, that for us suffered death: thanked and worshipped be he ever therefor. Thus the divine might hath ordained this worthy sacrament. *N.*

"The saints that be in heaven should see him in none other likeness than we ourselves do if they saw him in such a likeness [*i.e.*, in the Host] as we see him; but they see by understanding of spirit. For, to see the humanity of Jesu Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, glorified, except by the understanding, that doth not appertain to the glory of those in glory. Therefore they see him not glorified, except by understanding, and we see him by virtue of faith, contradicting therein the reasoning of our wits [which tell us] that we see but bread, nor feel nor savour nor smell [aught else]. But our faith withsaith* all that and believeth verily and soothly, without any doubt, that it hath not whiteness nor taste nor smell, but [is] the precious body of our Lord Christ Jesu, very God and man. Now we see him by faith. So do not they of glory, for they that be glorified use not of faith: they see not by faith as we do. In this secret, the divine Trinity hath ordained the holy Sacrament of the Altar to nourish and to sustain holy Church," saith the soul of Faith, illumined by the divine Trinity. "Such is the ordinance of the Sacrament of the Altar in [the] knowing of him [according to] my belief, through divine might."

"Marvel not," saith Courtesy, "of the goodness of Love, though we, for love, tell

* *i.e.*, denies.

you these things. For I tell you truly, that none may come to [a] deep foundation, nor to high edification, unless they reach it by the discrimination of great natural intelligence, and by the gladness of the understanding of the spirit. And, moreover, a creature may not seek to know too much by asking* the divine will; for the understanding that giveth light, showeth to the soul [the] being that she loveth. And the soul that receiveth by light of understanding the nighing and the knitting,† in the accord of union in plenteous love, seeth the being where she aims at having her dwelling place; heareth gladly the light of knowing,‡ that bringeth her tidings of love; and then she would be made the same, so that she had but one will in love, and that is the sole will of him that she loveth."

" Reason," saith Love, " I answer thee, for I have said, that a soul that is made free knoweth all; and she knoweth naught. She knoweth by the virtue of faith that which she needeth to know for salvation; and she knoweth naught, for she knoweth naught of

* *i.e.*, by questioning.

† " The nighing and the knitting "—*i.e.*, the being made near and the union.

‡ Note the mixed metaphor, " *seeing* the being . . . *hearing* the *light* of knowing "; the identification of light with sound as the medium of the divine communication is suggestive, and may be paralleled from other mystics. Cf. Rolle's *Fire of Love*.

that which God hath in him, of him, for him, that he giveth to none but himself. Then by this understanding this soul knoweth all and she knoweth naught. She willeth and she willeth not. For this soul," saith Love, " willeth so perfectly the will of God, that she cannot will and may not will but the will of God. In such [a] prison love hath reclused her. And she willeth naught, for it is so little this that she willeth and that God willeth in her, in comparison with this that she would will, which she may not have, [namely] that [which] God wills her to have [ultimately].* And this [also, namely] that her will is naughted in respect to her sufficiency, which was never given nor never shall be given; that is the meaning of willing the will of God, as it is said before, then by this understanding this soul willeth all and she willeth naught.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW THESE SOULS SO SET THEIR THOUGHTS IN THE TRINITY AND BE SO DIVINE THAT THEY REST THEM NOT IN THINGS THAT BE PASSING OR MADE

THIS daughter of Sion desireth neither masses nor sermons, fastings nor orisons.

* *i.e.*, His love—ultimately, and moreover her will.

"Why so?" saith Reason. "Lady Love, it is the food of holy souls!"

"It is true for them that crave,"* saith Love, "but this soul craveth not, for she hath in her inwardness† no nature to desire anything that is outside herself. Now understand, Reason," saith Love, "why do such souls desire these things aforesaid, since it is so, that God is over all, *without* that, as well as *with* all that.‡

"This soul hath neither thought, word, nor work, except for the exercise of the divine grace of the Trinity; she is not troubled on account of sin that she ever did, nor for the suffering that Christ Jesu suffered for her, nor for sin, nor for distress§ that her even-Christian have." ||

"Ah God," saith Reason, "what is this

* Crave, desire, and long spiritually.

† *i.e.*, disposition.

‡ *i.e.*, God is sovereign in any case, without all the extra labours of love by which souls seek to prove their loyalty. He is served without it as well as with it.

§ MS. "disease." Throughout dis-ease = distress, trouble, anxiety.

|| This statement of the degree of indifference to be reached by the soul is put in an extreme and provocative form to call forth a challenge. Something must be allowed throughout for the form of the *jeu-parti* or dialogue in which the opposite sides are stated in the most extreme terms. Here the answer of Love silences adverse criticism.

to say? Love! teach me the understanding, who hast given me peace concerning my other questions!"

"This is," saith Love, "that this is not *with* her,* nor may she have this of herself, for her thought is set in that [which is] peaceable, that is, in the Trinity. She may not thence move nor have dis-ease, as long as her beloved is at ease, though any [should] fall into sin, nor for sin that ever was done. It displeaseth her will, and so it doth God; it is his own displeasure that to this soul giveth such displeasure. In sooth," saith Love, "but the Trinity hath in him no dis-ease for such displeasing, no more hath this soul that in him is set and by him led. But if this soul, that is thus high set, might help any of her even-Christians, she would help them at their need with all her might. But the thoughts of this soul be so divine, that they rest not so much in things that be passing nor made, as to conceive any dis-ease for [them] in her inwardness, since God is good beyond [all] comprehending."

* She is not preoccupied; the thoughts stated above are not always in her mind, nor does this come to her of herself.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW THIS SOUL GIVETH TO NATURE ALL THAT IT ASKETH WITHOUT GRUDGING OF CONSCIENCE, AND HOW THIS IS MEANT

THIS soul giveth to nature all that he asketh without grudging of conscience, for all covetousness* of nature is mortified in these creatures; and therefore the law of our Lord Jesu Christ is within such life enclosed, and the divine gifts be above this law. "This is sooth," saith Love, "that this soul sets not so much prize nor love on temporal things, that she could win [anything] in refusing nature's askings; wherefore then should she make [it a matter of] conscience, to give nature that which is his due? But such nature is so well ordered by its conjunction in union with the divine love, to which the will of this soul is joined, that she asketh nothing that is against the ordinance of the divine righteousness. But these creatures that be thus excellent, that men dare not speak openly in special of their ways, by the

* MS. "properties"—probable translation of O.F. *propriété*—the technical term for self-love, covetousness, spirit of proprietorship. *Cf.* here Rom. vii and viii, and seventeenth-century use of term in Fénelon.

use of which these souls have Being, unto good understanding; but mis-sayers taste not of such understanding. I have said before," saith Love, "that men dare not speak openly of their usages; without fail, no! on account of the simple understanding of other creatures who might to their damage misunderstand it."

CHAPTER XIX

HOW THESE SOULS HAVE NO HEAVINESS AT HEART FOR THINGS THAT THEY TAKE; AND OF THE PEACE THAT THEY HAVE IN TAKING THE NEEDFULNESS OF NATURE

"THESE souls," saith Love, "that such be, as in this book is devised, which toucheth some thing of their usages; they have by righteousness of their being—which is the pure divine being—such condition, that if they had naught and were certain that they should live unto the day of judgement, they might not have heaviness of heart one hour, for thing that faileth them, nor spend a time to seek work for that which faulteth them, for all the gold of the world; except at a time when nature hath a need [in] which it is lacking, [that they may] give to nature that which is his. And if they have anything, these that be such, few folks wit where they be, but it

behoveth that there be [men who] by the goodness of God, in whom is all bounty, [should supply something] to sustain the faith of Holy Church.* And if they wist that others had more need than they, of thing which they have, they would not deny it them, though they were certain that never should grow wheat nor corn nor other sustenance. This is sooth," saith Love, "of this let no one doubt, such is their nature by pure righteousness and such righteousness is divine righteousness, which to this soul giveth a portion."

"This is right," saith Divine Right, "it behoveth that all righteousness in her be fulfilled. And it withdraweth if she withholdeth anything that is hers from the perfection of peace of charity in which she lieth; all this is her right food. Why should such souls have conscience to take that which they lack, and that which is theirs, when they have need? It were to such souls a default of innocence and encumbering of peace, wherein this soul resteth from all things. Who is he that hath [a] conscience

* These souls do not allow themselves to be anxious concerning that which they lack, nor go out of their way to supply their own needs unless it be a real necessity of Nature. Even if they have some possessions, they themselves are hidden from men. But it is necessary that some men should supply the needs of those who live by Faith in Holy Church.

to take the four elements that he needeth—the light of the welkin, the heat of the fire, the moisture of the water, and of the earth that sustaineth us? We take the service of the four elements in all the manners that nature hath need, without grudging of reason, as we do other things. These souls use of all things made, of which nature hath need, with such peace of heart as they do of the earth, that they go upon."

CHAPTER XX

HOW THESE SOULS CAN NO MORE SPEAK OF GOD AND WHAT THEIR CUSTOM IS

"THEY have a good foundation," saith Love, "and high edification that resteth them of all things. Such creatures, they can no more speak of God, no more than they can say where God is. No more can they say truly what good God is. For whosoever it be that speaketh of God, when he will, and to whom he will, and where he will, he may doubt."*

"This is sooth, without fail," saith this soul, "nor did he feel the true tidings of

* The excess of "speaking *about*" God leads to dissipation of spirituality and a reactionary mood of aridity in the emotions and doubt in the intellect ensues.

divine love that maketh the soul at all times abashed without her perceiving [it];* for the very tidings, refined, purified by divine love which are without [the intervention of creatures] and given of the Maker to the creature, truly take away such usages. For this is the custom of such souls, much to comprehend and soon to forget by the subtlety of the Beloved."

CHAPTER XXI

WHAT KNOWLEDGE, FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY HAVE OF THESE SOULS, AND WHO HATH THE VERY KNOWLEDGE OF THEM, AND HOW VIRTUES BE COMMANDED FOR THE SOULS, AND NOT THE SOULS FOR THE VIRTUES, AND OF MORTIFYING WILL AND DESIRE

"Ah, Holy Trinity," saith Faith, Hope, and Charity, "where be these perfected souls, that be such as this book deviseth? What be they, and what do they? Teach it us, for love, that all wot, and so shall we appease them that be dismayed or marvelled to hear this book, for all Holy Church would marvel," say these three divine virtues, "if she heard it."

* That communication of divine Love is made to the soul in such a hidden way that she does not perceive it—but the fruit is that humility which rejects those habits of "talking about God."

" I leave it," saith Faith himself.

" Sooth," saith Love, " that ' Holy-Church-the-little,' that is governed by reason [would marvel], but not that ' Holy-Church-the-great,' of [ours]," saith divine Love, " which is governed by us."*

" Now tell me," saith Love to the three divine virtues, " why ask ye of us, what these souls be and where they be, and what they do ?

" Truly," saith Love, " but if ye know that no one can find them whom God hath made; and where they be, ye know all three," saith Love, " for ye be with them in all moments of time.† (Because ye three be to us good.) And what they do, ye know also; but what they be, as for to speak of their value and of their dignity that know neither ye nor they, then may Holy Church not know."

* The distinction is not to be interpreted literally or of any divisions in Holy Church. The author refers probably to a rough classification of " rationalists " and " mystics " among the teachers and disciples within the general body of the Church—each regarding itself as an *electa ecclesia*. The dramatic humour of the writer must be allowed for in this and some subsequent passages.

† It is enough to know that God has hidden these souls—yet are others near them, for they are always " among us," unknown. The following phrase seems to be a parenthesis addressed by such souls to others—" for these three modes of hiddenness are a benefit to us."

"Oh, for God," saith Reason, "who knoweth then?"

"That [knoweth] only God," saith Love, "who hath made them and bought them; and ofttimes this may so be wrought [in them] that by his love alone they be both fulfilled and naughted and forgotten."

"Why," saith Love, "marvelleth Holy Church, though the virtues serve the high heavenly souls, and why should they not? Are not all these virtues allowed, written and commanded for the souls, and not the souls for the virtues? so that such virtues be made to serve the souls, and these souls be made to obey God and to receive the singular gifts God giveth to no creature that in desire and in will dwelleth? Therefore whosoever would have these gifts let him flee desire and will, for otherwise they may not have them.

"And why," saith Love, "knoweth not Holy Church* these Queens, King's daughters, King's sisters, King's spouses? for it may not be that Holy Church knew them perfectly unless Holy Church were within their souls. And nothing that is wrought entereth within these souls, but only that God who hath made them; so that none knoweth such souls but God that is within these souls."

* *i.e.*, does not Holy Church recognise.

CHAPTER XXII

WHAT THE PERFECT BEING IS THAT GOD GIVETH TO CREATURES; AND HOW NONE KNOWETH THESE SOULS BUT GOD THAT IS WITHIN THEM

"Ah, Lady Love," saith Reason, "be not displeased, for yet I must have one more question. And unless ye tell it me, I shall be abashed* of this which ye say; [namely], that none knoweth these souls but only God that made them."

"Reason," saith Love, "what is thy question?"

"I shall tell it you," saith Reason. "This book saith thus, that none knoweth these souls but God that is within their souls. And it saith in another place before, that none can find them, nor know them but they whom Fine Love leadeth, and whoever should find such souls he could say the truth thereof. "Then seemeth it," saith Reason, "that they that be such, [would] know them that be such, if they were where these be?"

"This is sooth," saith Love, "for these that be such, if they were where these be, they should know their fellows by their usages, but most by the virtue of the gift that is given them, which is singular."

* Confounded by.

"Singular!" saith Reason. "Oh, without fail! Singular is it, for I have in the hearing thereof singular marvel!"*

"Reason," saith Love, "one word hath twain understandings, for though these that be such have knowledge of the usages of these souls, and that it is the most perfect being that God giveth to creatures, nevertheless *know* they not these souls, nor the dignity of them, for none knoweth them, but only that Lord God that made these souls."

* There seems to be a play on words, singular meaning first, exceptional, unique, and then strange.

DIVISION IV

CHAPTER I

HOW IT IS MEANT THAT THIS SOUL HATH TAKEN LEAVE OF VIRTUES; AND OF A LAND OF THIS SOUL; AND OF THE DESIRE THAT THEY THAT LIVE "IN WILL AND DESIRE" MUST HAVE

"O LOVE," saith Reason, "yet I pray you to have another question; for this book saith, that this soul hath taken leave of virtues for evermore, and you say that the virtues be always *with* such souls,* and more perfectly than with any other. These be two contrary words as meseemeth," saith Reason; "I cannot understand them."

"I shall satisfy thee," saith Love; "this is the truth, that this soul hath taken leave of virtues, as concerning the exercise thereof,† and of all the desires that they ask; but the virtues have not taken leave of the souls, for they are always with them and perfectly obedient to them. And in this sense taketh the soul leave of them, and [yet] are they

* Cf. note *supra*, p. 18.
† Cf. note *infra*, p. 299.

always with these souls; for I make an ensample [of it], as thus: If a man serve a master, he is with him whom he serveth, but his master is not with *him*. And if it so fall that he gaineth much of his master, and learneth so well that he is more rich and more wise than the master, and is held better and more worthy than he be, then he that was master to him, seeth for certain that he that was his servant is more worth, and is more able* in all manner ways than he, and dwelleth with him for to obey to him in all. Right thus ought ye to understand of these souls and of virtues. For at the beginning, this soul did all that it might of heart and of body, all that reason taught her which was at that time mistress. And she told her alway, that she should do all that the virtues would, without any withstanding, unto the death. So that Reason and the other virtues were ladies and mistresses over the soul. And this soul was truly obedient unto all that they would command. Thus must a soul do first in her beginning, if she would live spiritual life. And now this soul hath so much won and learned of virtues, that she is above the virtues;† for such souls have in them all that the virtues can teach, and much more, without comparison. For

* MS. "more can."

† Above=in command of.

this soul hath in her the mistress of virtues, who is called divine Love; which hath led her, in them, in all, and [hath] oned her to him, so that she is not 'with' herself, nor 'with' virtues."

"With whom, then?" saith Reason, which-would-by-asking-learn.

"At my will, Reason," saith Love, "who have turned her wholly to me."

"And what be ye, Love?" saith Reason; "be ye not a virtue with us, except that ye are above us?"

"I am God," saith Love. "For Love is God and God is Love; and this soul is God by condition of love; and I am God by nature divine. And this is hers by righteousness of love, so that this precious beloved of me is learned and led of me without her [working]; for she is turned to me in me. And such end," saith Love, "taketh nurture.*

"This is the eagle† that flieth high; so

* And this is the end of nurture—*i.e.*, upbringing. The Latin version has: *Et talis docta, dicit dilectio, doctrina capit.*

† Cf. Dionysius Areopagita, *Heavenly Hierarch.*, chap. xv, section viii (tr. Parker): "The representation of the eagle denotes the kingly and soaring and swift in flight, and quickness in search of the nourishment which makes strong, and wariness and agility and cleverness, and the unimpeded, straight, and unflinching gaze towards the bounteous and brilliant splendour of the Divine rays of the sun, with the robust extension of the visual power."

right high and yet more high than doth any other bird, for she is feathered with fine love, and she beholdeth above others the beauty of the sun. And the beam and the brightness of the sun and the heat thereof give her as food the gum of the high cedar.

"'And then,' saith this soul to her caitiff wretched nature, that so many a day hath made her in servitude to dwell: 'Dame Nature,' saith she, 'I take leave of you, love is me nigh that holdeth me free of him, against all, without dread.'

"Then," saith Love, "she feareth* not for tribulation, nor ceaseth† for consolation, nor groweth less for what is taken from her.‡ She is common to all, by largesse of pure charity. And she asketh not of none, because of the nobility and courtesy of her pure bounty [with] which God hath fulfilled her, by himself. And she is in all times demure without heaviness, and glad without dissolution, for God hath in this soul hallowed his name, and the divine Trinity hath there his house."

"O ye little [ones], who in will and in desire dwell," saith this soul, "take the spoils§ of your food, and desire that ye might be such, for he that desireth the least, unless

* MS. "effrayeth." † MS. "stinteth."
‡ MS. "aminuseth not for substraction."
§ MS. "prey."

he desire the most, it is not worthy that God do to him the best of his goodness, on account of the slackness of his poor courage. All those that so live, they be always enfamined or hungried."

CHAPTER II

OF THE TWO STAFFS THAT THIS FREE SOUL LEANETH HER UPON; AND HOW SHE IS MORE DRUNK OF THAT SHE NEVER DRANK NOR NEVER SHALL DRINK, THAN OF THAT SHE HATH DRUNK

"THIS free soul," saith Love, "leaneth her upon two staffs,* the one on the right side, and the other on the left side. On these two staffs she is strong against her enemies, as is a castle upon a hill, or that is surrounded with water, which naught may wash away.†

"The one of these two staffs that this soul resteth on to keep her from her enemies, is that she keepeth the gifts of her riches, that is, the true knowledge that she hath of the poverty of herself. This is the left staff, the which she leaneth on alway at all times; this is to her, great strength.

"And the second staff, on the right side, is

* MS. "potente"—*i.e.*, crutch.
† MS. "it may myn."

the upraised knowledge of the Deity that this soul receiveth and keepeth firmly. Upon these two staffs she is apeased,* and taketh no count of her enemies, neither on the right side nor on the left side.

" But she is abashed," saith Love, " by the knowledge of her poverty, which she hath of herself, that it seemeth her that it is a humiliation† before all the world, as it is to her.‡ And also she is drunk of the knowing of the divine bounty, by the pure grace of the Deity, of which she is always drunk, and of the beholding thereof, fulfilled with laud and hearing of divine love; not drunken of that which she hath drunk, but she is right drunk, and more drunk, of that which she never drank nor never shall drink."§

" Ah for God, Love," saith Reason, " what is this to say, that this soul is drunk of that she never drank nor never shall drink?

* *i.e.*, made peaceful.

† MS." embaschement."

‡ Or," that it is to all the world a humiliation, as it is to her inmost being."

§ The mystical exaltation of the soul proceeds not so much from what she has already experienced of the divine love, but from the knowledge of the infinite possibilities of the content of the divine being and his love. Here, again, the emphasis is on faith rather than experience. She is inebriated by her contemplation of the divine satisfaction of the Trinity, which results from the perfect intercommunion of the Three Blessed Persons.

It seemeth to me," saith Reason, " as I may understand these words, that it is a greater thing to this soul to be drunken of that which her love drinketh and shall drink of the divine tun* of his own bounty, than of that which she hath not drunk and never shall drink; for she is drunken of the drink that he drinketh of the divine fauset† of the same tun."

" It is right," saith Love, " that the ' most ' has made her drunk;‡ not indeed that she hath drunken of the 'most,' as it is said before; but she hath it, for as much as her love hath it; for there is between him and her no disseverance nor contrariety of nature whatsoever, through any discord of love. Love maketh in her of righteousness this union, that hath made her drink of the *most* of his highest drink, and [it] never shall be otherwise. It may well be that there be many fausets in a tun, but the most clear wine and the most fresh and profitable and the most delectable and the most inebriating without fail, is the wine of the sovereign fauset, of which none drinketh but the Trinity. And it is of this fauset, without which she

* Tun = measure.

† Fauset = the tap of the cask, hence the Fountain.

‡ A play on words, the " most," a word for wine, ale; also, as will occur again later, used for God—who is the *more* and *most* in relation to the lesser revelations of himself.

drinketh,* that a naughted soul is drunk! a free soul, drunk! a forgotten soul, drunk!—but right drunk and more than drunk! of that she never drank nor never shall drink. Hear this if ye understand it.

"Now, there is in this tun of divine drink, many fausets; this knoweth the manhood that is knit to the person of God the Son, who drank of the most noble wine next the Trinity. And the Virgin Mary drank of the one after, and of the most high drink is this noble Lady inebriated. After them drank the burning seraphins, with whose wings these free souls fly."

"Ah God," saith Holy Church, "how it behoveth her to attend and cleanly keep herself, the soul that thus high flieth!"†

CHAPTER III

OF THE FREEDOM OF THESE SOULS, AND HOW THEY DO NOTHING THAT IS AGAINST THE PEACE OF INWARDNESS

"SUCH souls," saith Love, "have the mind and the understanding and the will low, by meekness and right perceiving, of knowing by subtlety of wit in divine [things], and

* It is of this measure (which she does *not* actually drink=without which) that a naughted soul is drunk.

† Cf. Dion. Areop., *de hierarchiis celest.*

[are] right free in all places, of the love of the Deity."

"Ah, Love!" saith Reason, "when are these souls in the right freedom of pure love?"

"When they have no desire," saith Love, "nor no feeling, nor in any time, affection of spirit; for whosoever maketh use of such practices, they be full far from the peace of freedom, where few folk suffer them to dwell. Nor do they do nothing," saith Love, "that is against the peace of their inward being, and thus they are in peace, in the ordinance of Love.

"The persons that are such, they are thus called and fulfilled, that they have within them no craving of anything. And without them they have the beams of the divine sun; they keep cleanness of heart, and none but they. These souls," saith Love, "have knowing of the 'more,' without having knowing, so they may not crave nor have sufficiency of the least thing. Such souls be all one in all things, and equable* in all things, for they do not unfree† their being, for nothing that may them fall;‡ for right

* MS. "common."

† *i.e.*, repent of, grieve for their state whatever it is.

‡ These souls are all one in all things, and equable in all things, and they are not troubled about their

as the sun hath of God his light and shineth upon all thing without taking any uncleanness in him, right so have these souls their being, of God, and in God, without taking any uncleanness in them for thing that they see or hear."

"Eh, Love," saith Reason, "do these souls feel no joy in their inwardness; nor in their outwardness?"

"No," saith Love, "right as thou saidest, for the nature of them is mortified, and the spirit dead; for all will is from them departed; thus live they, thus be they, in such a death according to the divine will."

"Now, Reason," saith Love, "understand thy question. He that brenneth hath no cold, nor he that drinketh hath no thirst, and this soul," saith Love, "is so burnt in the furnace of fire of love, that she is become fire; so that she feeleth no fire, for she herself is fire, by the virtue of love that hath brought her into himself, by fine love. This fire brenneth of him in him, in all places and in all moments of time, without taking any substance from Will, but of himself. For he who feeleth [any thing] of God, through any substance that he seeth or heareth outside

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condition whatever may befall them, "forthynken not"=repent of, are displeased at; Bod. has "unfreeth not."

himself, or by effort that he maketh of himself, that,* is not all fire, but there is substance [mixed] with this fire. For the labour of man and the desire to have some substance outside himself, to increase his love, that is but some shadowing or glimmering of knowing of the bounty of God.† They that burn with this fire aforesaid, without seeking substance to have or to will, see so clearly in all things, that they appraise the things according as they ought to be appreciated; for such a soul hath no substance in her that might blemish her clear sight, since she is made one [and] naughted by virtue of very meekness; and she is open to all largesse of perfect charity, and she is all one in God, by the divine action of pure fine love.

* *i.e.*, the emotional reaction from hearing or reading about God or from seeing good things connected with the service of God.

† This fire of love so often described by mystical writers is carefully distinguished here from all psycho-physical phenomena. The author points out that the natural human desire for devotion and increase of love, for some outward assurance of God's love and demonstration of our human love, leads to natural efforts which may procure some such phenomena, experienced as fire. But these " substantial " experiences are unsubstantial compared with the purely spiritual " fire," that seeks no outward phenomena, but issues in a spiritual and clear knowledge and valuation of things as they are. This is achieved only when the soul is purified from sin and open to all in true charity.

"This soul loveth no more anything in God, nor never shall love, how good soever it be, but only for God and because God wills it. Thus she loveth God in all things and all things for God, so that for this love is this soul alone, or all-one in the pure love of the love of God. Such a soul is so clear in knowing, that she seeth herself not in God, nor God in herself."

CHAPTER IV

HOW THAT CONSOLATIONS THAT COMFORT THE SOULS BY FEELING OF SWEETNESS, IT PROFITETH NOT A SOUL, BUT MEDITATION OF PURE LOVE; AND HOW THAT HATH ONLY ONE MEANING, AND WHAT THAT MEANING IS

"Now understand the remnant, Lords hearing, Lords loving! by a meditation of [the] love [that is] without [the] hearing [that cometh from] creatures, by such meditation that souls receive in love without desiring any of his gifts, which men call consolations that comfort souls, by feeling of sweetness in prayer. These teach not the soul, nor any other usages, but pure love; for he who would have the comforts of God by feelings of consolation, he breaketh the price of fine love.

"MEDITATION OF PURE LOVE" hath but only one purpose, and that is this, that she loveth alway truly, without willing any guerdon. And this may not the soul do unless she be outside herself;* for true love ought not to desire any consolations that come of excess [of desire].† No truly! Meditation of pure love knoweth well moreover that she ought not to occupy herself‡ so, but to follow his work:§ that is, to will perfectly the will of God. And she must let God work and be disposed‖ to his will, for they that have a will that God should do their will, willing to feel his comforts, they trust not perfectly in his sole bounty, but in the gifts of his riches that he hath to give."

"Without fail," saith this soul, "he that loveth well, he thinketh not either of taking nor of asking, but of giving, without anything withholding, that he may love truly. For in him who that hath two purposes at one time, the one lessens¶ for the other. There-

* *i.e.*, separated from self-interest, interest centred *in* herself. † MS. "of her abuse."

‡ MS. "busy her so."

§ Keep her attention fixed upon, occupy herself with the work God is doing, as well as doing the work he has given her to do. Cf. John vi 29.

‖ MS. Bod. "aworth of." MS. British Museum, "alane of."

¶ MS. "lassith."

fore true love hath but only one purpose, and that is that she might alway love truly. For of the love of her Beloved hath she no doubt, that he doth that which is best. And she followeth this, and she doth that which she ought to do, and she willeth only one thing, and it is that the will of God be alway in her done."

"She is right," saith Love, "for this is all. She may not will by her own will, for her will is not with-her, but it is [without any leading thither], in him that she loveth. And this is not her work, but it is the work of all the Trinity that worketh in this soul at his will."

CHAPTER V

OF THE JOY OF THOSE SOULS AND OF THE ACCORDANCE OF WILL OF THE BELOVED AND THE SOUL; AND OF THE UNION OF LOVE

"THIS soul," saith Love, "swimmeth in the sea of joy, that is, in the sea of delights, streaming with divine influences. She feeleth no joy, for she herself is joy. She swimmeth and is drowned in joy, for she leadeth in joy without feeling any joy. So is joy in her that she herself is joy, by the virtue of joy that hath brought her into him. Now is the will of the Beloved and the will of this

soul turned into one, as fire and flame, for love hath this soul all drawn into him."

"Ah, right, sweet, pure, divine Love," saith this soul. "What a sweet union is this, that I am drawn into the thing that I love more than me; thereby have I lost my name for loving, who so little may love! Thus am I drawn into the thing that I love more than me, that is, in Love, for I love only Love."

CHAPTER VI

WHAT IT MEANS THAT THIS SOUL DOTH NO THING THAT IS AGAINST THE PEACE OF HER INWARD BEING, AND OF AN EXAMPLE THEREUPON

"O Lady Love," saith Reason, "tell us what it means, this that ye say: that then is the soul in her right freedom of pure clean love, when she doth no thing that is against the asking of peace of her inward being?"

"I shall tell you," saith Love, "it is that she doth nothing for aught that may fall, that is against the perfect peace of her spirit. This," saith Love, "the very innocents do.* And the being, which we speak of, is very innocence. Reason," saith Love, "I give thee an ensample, Behold the child that is a very pure innocent. Doth he anything

* Very innocents = "babes."

or ceaseth he* to do [it], for high or for low, except it please him ?"

" I grant well, Love," saith Reason. " I am wise of my question."†

M. This ensample that Love maketh of the innocents that they do nothing nor leave to do, for high nor for low, except it please them, it meaneth, that these creatures should not do for one or for another whatever might unrest the quiet of their spirits. For these spiritual souls that be lovers of God, to whom Love speaketh in the person of one, to be understood for all; they are so led and updrawn by the work of the Holy Ghost, that they may not suffer that anything touch them but the pure touchings of love or things which lead thereto. Nor may their spirit endure that the body obey with [considered] deliberation, to [set about] doing anything of the outward works that might hinder this divine love, or the usages that are the means thereof, and lead towards this pure love. So they stand to attend [upon], and wait to follow the Lord's work, who is sovereign master; for if they do the contrary, truly, it will unrest them. And therefore love biddeth them that they do nothing that may break the peace and rest of their spirits. *N.*

* MS. " leaveth." † =instructed as to.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THIS SOUL FINDETH GOD IN ALL THINGS; AND OF THE INCOMPREHENSIBLENESS OF GOD

"Ah, Lady Love," saith Reason, "I pray you that ye summon* and call this soul to hearken all that may be said to her, of him that is all in all things."

"This wot she," saith Love, "for there she findeth him alway; for a thing must be found where it is. And for this, that he is all by all, this soul," saith Love, "findeth him over all, so that because of this, all things are to this soul convenient; for she findeth nothing but that she findeth God.

"Now, Reason," saith Love, "why wilt thou that I call or summon this soul to hear of God, all that may be said?"

"For this," saith Reason, "that she may dwell in her being of innocence without moving to hear you speak."†

"And shall I tell thee a truth?" saith Love. "I certify thee, Reason," saith Love, "and trust me fully, that all that this soul hath

* MS. "assume." O. Fr. *sommer?*

† She will not "go forth" from her retirement to hear you speak, by her own motion—only if you call and summon her.

heard of God and all that might be said, is not worth speaking of compared to that which is in him, that never was said nor never shall be, and may not be said: and that is some thing that I have said, may not be said. But yet more," saith Love, "in order to increase the joy and the sorrow of the soul, and to remind her of all her graces.* Lady Soul," saith Love, "I tell you one thing for all, and passing that, desire no more to hear, for ye shall lose your pains; that all creatures —this is to understand without none putting out—that be and shall be, in the vision of the sweet face of your spouse, have not comprehended of him, nor shall comprehend, in truth, nor in knowing, nor in love, nor in hearing, anything."

"Ah, Love," saith this soul, "what shall I do? Certainly I believed never any thing better than this that ye have told me right now. But one thing, Lady Love, I would tell you gladly, if I might."

"Sweet soul," saith Love, "now tell me your desire, for I will hear it."

* MS. "takings."

CHAPTER VIII

A COMPLAINT OF THIS SOUL, AND OF THE COMFORT THAT LOVE GIVETH HER, AND HOW SHE IS NOT SUFFICED NOR APPEASED IN THAT WHICH LOVE TELLETH HER, BUT WHEREIN SHE *IS* SUFFICED, COMFORTED, AND APPEASED; AND WHEREIN SHE HATH THE FULL SUBSTANCE OF HER DEMANDS

"AH right, sweet Love," saith this soul that is abashed, "for God, tell me wherefore thought he to make me, and buy me again unto redemption, in order to give me so little, who hath so much to give?—But it dare not be said of anything that he wills to do!—I know," saith this soul, "that if ever I had anything to give, I would not give him so small a portion;* I that am naught and he is all. Certainly, I might not withhold from him, but I should give him all, if I had whereof to give. And that little that I had of worth, I have not withholden it from him, but all fully I have given him, body, heart, and soul; this knoweth he. Now I have given him all, so that I have not whereof to give: it seemeth well by this that I would gladly give him if I had anything to give. And he that hath taken all that I have of worth, he gave it me; and he hath all with-

* MS. "do to him so little parting."

holden! Eh, Love! for God's [sake], is this the manner of Love?"

"Ah, sweet soul," saith Love, "you know better than you say; for if you have given him all, that is the best that may befall you, for you have given him nothing but that was his before you gave it him; and now, behold what you have done for him!"

"Sweet Love," saith this soul, "you say sooth, I may not nor will not deny it."

"O right sweet soul," saith Love, "what would you that he gave you? Are you not his creature? Will you have of your beloved a thing that appertaineth not to him to give, nor for you to take? Appease you, Lady Soul, if you believe me, for there is none other thing than this for you [to do] but that you should have the gift of creature, soothly such as belongeth to you to have."

"Ah, Lady Love," saith this soul, "this said you not to me when I knew you first. You said to me that in the company of Beloved and lover, there is no lordship nor sovereignty—but there is! This I may clearly see since the one hath all and the other hath naught, in regard of his all. But if I might amend it, I would amend it, and if I had as much might as he* hath,

* MS. "as ye be of worth." An obscure passage in MSS.

I would love him as much as you are worth!"

"Ah right sweet soul," saith Love, "ye may no more say! Now appease yourself! For your will sufficeth to your Beloved, and here he sendeth you word by me, that ye may be certain of this that I shall tell you. He shall love nothing without you, nor you also love nothing without him! This is a great privilege, and this sufficeth you, sweet soul, if you believe me."

"Ah, Lady Love," saith this soul, "for God, be still of this, for truly I may not cease, even to save all the world, if it might be. For wit well this; I have nothing more of worth than this, for nothing that I love sufficeth me; for if it sufficed me this that I love, I should descend from that little that I have of love. But one thing sufficeth me, Lady Love, that I shall tell you," saith this soul, "that he that loveth more than me—and I do not love myself except for him—hath in him, that which ye have said, that none knoweth but he only.* And since I love him more than me, and he is the fulfilled of all goodness, my Lord, my God, and

* Love attempts to comfort "this soul" by the promise of great rewards for her present sense of loss, but the soul refuses this. Her only comfort is in the knowledge of the "sufficiency" of her Beloved, according to Pure Love.

mine all, this is my comfort altogether," saith this soul. "For if I be discomforted of that which I lack, I am recomforted againward, in that he lacketh nothing. Within him, he hath the abundance of all goodness without any failing. This is the fulhead and the substance of my peace, and the true rest of my thought, for I love not myself but for him. And since I love not myself but for him, there faileth me nothing whatever, as I have said afore.

"O without fail, no! in good understanding! Before this time I have had a desire to hear speak of him, for no creature might tell me of him, but that I heard it gladly with a good will. But Love hath now told me the truth, and biddeth me pacify myself; for all that men may tell me is naught in comparison with that which is in him, which may not be said. And more may nothing avail me to hear of him than this, that my love is not comparable to the least thing that men may compare to him, wherefore my love findeth none end in loving him, and hath alway new love of him in him who is all love, however great he be! This is the end of that," saith this soul, "that men can tell me naught, nor can I pacify myself in this which Love saith of him; so that I say to all, I have the full satisfaction of all my questions in this, that men can tell me

naught! and such is the Beloved of my soul," saith the soul herself.*

"Ah God! think how these souls endure in their wit!" saith Discretion.

"I know well," saith this soul, "that Love herself maketh them to endure, that is mistress of this work."

CHAPTER IX

HOW IT IS MORE IN THIS SOUL AND BETTER SHE LOVETH THAT WHICH IS IN HER BELOVED THAT SHE HATH NOT, NOR NEVER SHALL HAVE, THAN THAT SHE HATH IN POSSESSION; AND HOW THE BODY FOR HIS BOISTEROUSNESS AND FLESHLINESS CANNOT SPEAK OF THE TAKINGS OF THE SPIRIT

"I HAVE said before," saith this soul, "that nothing faulteth me,† since that my love hath all in him, of his rightwise nobleness, without beginning and shall have without end. Eh! what faulteth me then? I love not myself nor him, nor all his works, but only

* This passage is extremely obscure in the MS. It seems to imply a final defiance on the part of the soul. She is glad almost that her Beloved is such a one that men can tell her nothing adequate of him, and even Love's consolations fail to satisfy her high conception of Pure Love. These passages should be compared with Fénelon's writings on Disinterested Love.

† *i.e.*, is lacking.

for him. And that is more mine which he hath—which I have not nor shall not have —than is this which I have and shall have in possession of himself."

"Prove this!" saith Reason.

"This is easy to prove," saith this soul; "see here the proof! I love better in sooth, by an hundred thousand fold," saith the soul, "one of the abundant goods that dwell in him, than I do the gifts that I have and shall have of him in possession. And for this, I love better that which is in him out* of mine understanding, than that which is in him within mine understanding. And for this reason that is more mine which he knoweth and I know not, than this which I know and which is mine. For there where is most of my love, there is most of my treasure. And for this, I love better the 'most' of him that never I shall know, than I do mine which I know. And therefore is that 'more' mine, because the 'most' of my love [is in it]:† witness of love himself!

* *i.e.*, beyond.

† "The most" is the greater part of God, unknown and unknowable; the soul loves better the infinitely greater hidden Deity than that small part of him of which she has had experience. "Where her treasure is, there is her love also," and therefore the hidden treasure is more truly hers, "the more is mine, because the most of my love is in it."

This is the end,"* saith this soul, "of the peace of my spirit. For one thing, Lady Love, I will say, that if it might so be that one of his creatures had in himself [by God's gift] as much power and will to give me joy and glory—as all those receive of his [heavenly] court—unless he himself properly gave it me, I should refuse it without end, rather than [that] I should take it or desire it of any other, than of himself. Soothly no, not for to have it evermore, for I might not! Thus, of himself, he hath taken me, I can have no 'will' because of him; thus it is!

"O right sweet Love," saith this soul, "for God's [sake] suffer me, for I am all abashed for him! Oh, what ask I of him? I wot forsooth, that no more than men may tell the waves of the sea, when the wind bloweth hard and strong, no more may any creature write or say the comprehendings of the spirit, how little it comprehendeth of God. This is sooth, for the body is too boisterous and fleshly for to speak of the takings† of the spirit. But men say in the world: better is worth somewhat than naught.‡ Right so, I tell you," saith this soul, "that is better and more worth to hear thing that is written and said of God than if men heard naught."

* *i.e.*, the sum. † *i.e.*, conceptions.

‡ The medieval equivalent of "A bird in the hand," etc.

CHAPTER X

OF THE GIFTS THAT THIS SOUL HATH RECEIVED OF HER BELOVED, AND WHAT HER USAGE IS

"O my Beloved," saith this soul, "how can I keep my wits* when I think on the gifts of your bounty, the which you have given me. You have given to my soul the vision of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, that my soul shall see without end. Then since I shall see so high a thing as is the Trinity, there shall not be taken from me the knowing of the angels and of souls. And since so great a thing is given me in gift, there shall not be withholden from me the vision of the little [thing]; this is to [be] understood of all those things that be less than God. Ah, my soul," saith this soul, "what have you done for me? Soothly, Lord, I am so abashed of that which I know, that I cannot but abash myself. I have none other usage nor none other usage may have, so overcometh me this knowledge continually."

M. Take heed of these words, that the soul saith, that she hath none other usage† nor none other may have. That is to say,

* MS. "how shall I dwell in my wits," Lat. *quam insaniam. . . .*

† *i.e.*, devotional practice.

during the time of that usage; for indeed every usage standeth for the time of its working; not that the soul is continually in them, for that may not be. But every usage is had* one after another, as love worketh and as dispositions come and go, but these usages are inhabited in the soul and used customarily. Therefore it is said in such terms as "alway," "thus," "in this wise." Many such other words in this book must be taken [thus]. *N.*

* Practised.

DIVISION V

CHAPTER I

OF THE VISIONS THAT THIS SOUL HATH HAD, AND HOW NO HUMAN BODY MAY SEE THEM; AND HOW THEY THAT KNOW THEIR NOTHINGNESS SHALL DO NAUGHT; AND WHAT IT BEHOVETH THEM TO DO WHO CANNOT COME TO THE KNOWING OF THEIR NAUGHT; AND OF THE DEFAULTS OF THIS SOUL, AND BY WHOM THEY BE ACQUITTED

O LORD, though I had no other reason to abash me than this, that you have given to my soul the vision of all the Trinity and of angels and of souls, that you have not given to your precious body that is knit and oned to the nature of the Father, in the Person of the Son;* it would be a marvel that I may see so much! For, Lord, it is so great a thing to see the angels and the

* This seems to mean that our Lord had not the beatific vision when he became incarnate. St Thomas taught that our Lord had the beatific knowledge in the highest degree, beyond that of angels and the blessed, from the moment of the Incarnation (*Incarnation*, x, 2-4).

souls to whom you have given the vision of your face, that no human body is worthy to see so great a thing, as be the angels and the souls. Then may not the body see the Trinity, since it may not see the angels and the souls. And, Lord, this gift you have given to my spirit, as long as you shall be God.

" O for God, Love," saith this soul, " tell me what I shall do, who have this in my knowledge ?"

" I shall tell you," saith Love, " and passing that, ask me no more ! If you know perfectly your naught,* you shall do naught. And this naught shall tell you all. And if you may not perfectly come to knowing your naught, that is, [the] truth as far as you are able, then it behoveth you to do something in truth, according to the best that you may do, or you shall destroy," saith Love, " that same thing which you have conceived in your spirit. If God hath drawn you into him, it doth not become you," saith Love, " to forget what you were, when he made you first, and what you have been since—if you took heed of your works—and what you are and shall be, except [for] that which is of God in yourself."

" Ah, Lord," saith this soul, " I am certain that I have nothing more availing than are

* *i.e.*, nothingness, and so throughout.

my horrible faults, for which faults you have suffered death, to give me life. For, Lord, my weening* is this, and it is truth, that though none had sinned but I alone, you would have bought my soul with your love, late laid on cross for me, by the use of powers ordained to destroy my sin. Then thus, my Beloved, you have suffered all that you have suffered in your sweet humanity for me, as much as if none had sinned but I alone! Lord, all this, I tell you, for me only! So that I say, for as much passing this, as I have naught that availeth, so much do you avail, better than the best of mine, for which you are given.

"And thus well you know, that I may naught do and I am so greatly indebted. O Lord God, right courteous and large and free, acquit me of this debt, you that have power all things to do!

"Ah, without fail," saith this soul, "Lord, so shall you do, and henceforward I will your perfect will, in all things."

* Opinion.

CHAPTER II

HOW GOD HATH LOVED THIS SOUL WITHOUT BEGINNING AND SHALL WITHOUT END; AND OF THE OBEDIENCE OF REASON TO THIS SOUL; AND OF THE ACCORDANCE OF THE WILL OF GOD AND OF THIS SOUL; AND OF HER PEACE AND OF PERFECT CHARITY; AND OF GRUDGING OF CONSCIENCE

"O RIGHT sweet Love," saith this soul, "grant me my possession that I have of the Trinity."

"Now tell your thought," saith Love, "for you ought not to hide it."

"Ah, Lady Love," saith this soul, "ye have told me that he that is in him [and] of him, shall be without beginning and without end; that he shall never have anything without me nor I without him."

"This is sooth," saith Love, "I am pledge* of this."

"Then," saith this soul, "since he shall never without end have nothing without me, then right so, he loved never nothing without me. And since it is so, that he shall be in me, without end by love, right so have I been loved of him without beginning."

"Look what you say, Lady Soul!" saith

* MS. "borrow."

Reason; " have you forgotten that it is so, that it is not long agone, that you were not; for God, right sweet soul, look that you err not !"

" If I err in this holding, Love," saith this soul, " you err with me, who make this to be believed, to be thought and to be said."

" Now prove it, Lady Soul !" saith Reason, " this, that you have said."

" O Reason," saith this soul, " how blinded thou art, and what trouble they have who by thy counsel live ! Reason," saith this soul, " if I shall be loved without end, of the three Persons in Trinity, I have been loved of them already without beginning. For as well as he shall love me without end, of his bounty, so have I been in the knowledge of his wisdom, that I should be made by the work of his divine might. Right as God is—that is, without any beginning—so have I been in his divine knowing, that I shall be without end. Then," saith the soul, " he loved of his goodness the work that he should do in me, of his divine might."

" This is sooth," saith Love, " he is—and never withheld [love] no more than he doth now."*

" Now may you hear, Reason," saith this soul, " the witness of Love."

" You shall be still now, for me, Lady

*. An obscure passage in the MSS.

Soul," saith Reason, "since love leadeth you and you not love; this is to say that love is in you and maintaineth you and leadeth and doth his will of you, without you. I dare no more meddle of you since love governeth you, but I promise,* Lady Soul, to you from henceforth, peace and obedience with all my might; for do it I must by strength, for Love willeth it. I may not be there-against, but I yield me to you in all," saith Reason.

"Now be the debts well returned:† this is right," saith the soul, "for the great nobility and courtesy of my spouse willeth not to leave me in your service; neither in yours nor others [leaveth he] his spouse, who has learned of him; for he is the Spouse most free."

"This is sooth, sweet soul," saith Love, "I grant it you."

"Ah, for God, Lady Soul," saith Reason, "think, say and do what you will, for Love granteth it you!"

"O Reason," saith this soul, "how rude thou art! If Love granteth me this, why should he not? it is his own proper deed. I have no 'deed' in me of myself, except he do it himself, my Beloved in me. And you, Reason, do you marvel of this?" saith the soul, "that he willeth what I will. And

* MS. "behote."
† "The tables turned."

will it he must, for I will not but only what he willeth in me; and what he willeth that I will. In this he hath set me of his courtesy; that he willeth this that I will, nor he willeth nothing that I unwill. So that by this I have peace, Reason!" saith this soul, "and we have, between him and me, true accord.

"O right sweet master of this work," saith this soul, "how may I have this peace, who know the great loss of my time? Ah, Sire, without fail I may, for your courtesy oweth it me and your noblesse, since you have peace, that I should have it also. So that I witness, my beloved Lord, that you have well quitted me of my debt, for I find no thing in which I find not peace, however it befall or hath fallen concerning my sins, your peace dwelleth with me. O thou Lord God!" saith this soul, "my sins may none know in this world, as they be, in hideous figure, save you. But they in heaven shall have it in their knowing, all those that there shall be; not to my confusion but to my great glory; for this, my sweet God, that by those sins in which I have made you wrath, your mercy shall be known and your great largesse, full of courtesy, shall be felt."

"Sooth," saith Love, "the which courtesy giveth peace in conscience to this soul, whatever she doeth or leaveth to do."

" Give, Lord," saith this soul, " to will your will perfectly, for to will perfectly your will is perfect charity."

" And who hath alway in his will perfect charity, he should no more have grudging of conscience," saith Love, " for grudging of conscience is naught else but a default of charity. Nor for no other thing was the soul made, but for to have in her without end the being of pure charity."

CHAPTER III

HOW ALL THAT THIS SOUL HATH SAID, IS SAID OF LOVE BY THIS SOUL, AND OF THIS LOSS OF TIME

" O MY Lord God," saith this soul, " what have I said of you !"

" Think," saith Love, " and see if you can know your words."

" Ah, Lady Love," saith this soul, " you have given me the knowing, and behold it here ! Naught is of such a nature, that naught must be naught. Then it behoveth," saith this soul, " that I be in certainty that this which I have said is less than naught. But this that is said in me or by me, is of divine knowing, Lady Love," saith this soul, " you have said it, in me and by me, of your

bounty, for my profit! To you be the glory, and to us the merit. This belongeth not to auditors that hear this book.

"O latest loved in all moments for me! O courteous without measure, this ought to seem well to me," saith this soul, "when you will meekly suffer. O Lord, you will suffer more gladly and meekly than any creature may say it, notwithstanding my faults that be without number, and without recovering of this loss [of time], for mercy that is in you; for it behoveth you to keep your justice. It may not be that time lost may ever be regained, and as oft as I have retired or withdrawn myself from loving and knowing and lauding and thanking you, so many moments of time I have been idle, and into these great defaults I am fallen. O Lord, I am a deepness of darkness, and in this darkness you will put me in, there dwell not the gifts of that grace of which love hath devised* us."

"Devised!" saith this soul, "all that love hath said of this grace, by me, creature, it is but japings, in comparison with his work."

"O sweet soul," saith Reason, "I have well heard this that ye have said; more gladly heard I never thing, so that I understand perfectly," saith Reason, "Lady Love, that this may none do but you alone, of whom this gift is given."

* O.F. *deviser*; to recount, narrate.

"Sooth," saith Love, "of such a person that is the Holy Ghost himself [is this gift given.]"

"Therefore I say," saith Reason, "that I may not understand it; but meseemeth that this which this soul doth, is so well done," saith Reason, "that I will serve her in all as her poor servant. And I acknowledge that I may have no greater joy nor greater worship than to be servant to this soul."

"*Do* you know this?" saith Love, "you could do no better than to know this!"

CHAPTER IV

WHAT ORDINANCE IS, AND HOW THAT THE DEITY FELT NOT WHAT THE MANHOOD OF JESU CHRIST SUFFERED, AND HOW IN ALL THINGS BEHOVETH TO HAVE DISCRETION

"Ah right sweet soul," saith Reason, "what shall I do for my people that I have to govern, that shall no more see of this soul's ordinance* in her outward usages?"

"Why?" saith Love, "is there other ordinance but this?"

"Nay," saith Reason, "not for them that see nor for them that be chosen in this

* *i.e.*, method.

assize: but of such be few in earth, I dare well say."

"Now, Reason," saith Love, "what callest thou ordinance?"

"I call ordinance," saith Reason, "the life of works of virtues [lived] continuously, by thy counsel and that of Discretion, after the ensample of our Lord Jesu Christ."

"Reason," saith Love, "this which the manhood of Jesu Christ suffered, the Deity felt it not. Right so I tell thee," saith Love, "by ensample of this soul, it fareth with her. This which thou speakest of virtues and of the reason," saith Love, "this soul recketh naught of; she may better do, for love worketh in her who hath led her into him, so that she herself is love. And Love hath in him no discretion. In all things it behoveth to have discretion, except in love. I give thee an ensample. [It is as] if a lord would have tribute in his land because men owed it him by rights; for the lord owes not tribute to his servants, but the servants owe it to their lord. Right so I tell you, Reason," saith Love, "all things owe me tribute. There be works of virtues, counselled of reason, ended by discretion; but they alone that be updrawn of love and led by love, they owe nothing but love; they are therefore as much quit as love hath quitted them."

CHAPTER V

WHO BE PERFECTLY WISE, AND WHO BE DIPPED IN MEEKNESS, AND HOW THIS SOUL IS BECOME NAUGHT IN HER BEHOLDING; AND HOW SHE IS DEAD TO ALL FEELINGS INWARD AND OUTWARD, AND WHAT CASE THAT SOUL IS IN, IN TIME OF THIS USAGE

"I CALL," saith Love, "this soul perfectly wise, among my chosen—but little folk cannot praise nor know of worthy value."

"Ah, Lady Love," saith Reason, "whom call ye wise?"

"Those that are dipped* in meekness," saith Love.

"Who be those that be dipped in meekness?" saith Reason.

"They," saith Love, "that in nothing are wrong, and know that they are in nothing right. They that be in this knowing of their wrong and of their right, see so clearly, that they see themselves under all creatures in filth of sin; and that the enemy is servant to sin. And this soul hath long seen that she is under sin and serveth sin and without comparison, passing all creatures, is naught. And that she is less than naught under them, without any comparison, as between herself

* Possibly "deeped."

and them, so much evil is of her [nature] and of her works. And because of this beholding, is this soul become naught, and less than naught in all her beholdings. She hath long heard say, by the Holy Ghost, that God setteth the least little at the most high [worth], of his sole bounty, and therefore, this soul hath no distress because of sin that she ever did, nor hope on account of thing that she might do, but only in the goodness of him that is her Beloved. And the hid treasure of his sole goodness hath so, in inwardness, annihilated her,* that she is dead to all feelings both inward and outward, so that such a soul doth no more 'works,' for God nor for her soul. She hath wholly lost her wits,† in this usage, so that she cannot seek God nor find him in her soul, nor lead herself."

CHAPTER VI

HOW THIS SOUL IS NOT *WITH*-HERSELF AND WHERE SHE IS; AND HOW BY NAUGHT WITTING AND NAUGHT WILLING SHE HATH ALL

"THIS soul," saith Love, "is not with-herself, and she is excused for everything; and he in whom she is, made his work for him-

* MS. "inentised." O.F. *anéanti*.

† *i.e.*, powers of reflection in the time of prayer.

self; he hath her well acquit—witness of God himself," saith Love, "that is the worker of this work, to the profit of this soul, which is not with-herself."*

"Ah, Love," saith Dread, "where is this soul then, that is not with-herself?"

"There where she loveth," saith Love, "without her witting,† and therefore liveth this soul without grudging of conscience. She doth nothing by her inward [guiding], for whoso doth anything by the moving of his inwardness, he is not," saith Love, "without-himself, for he is with-himself, and hath nature and reason with him. And he that is dead of love," saith Love, "feeleth neither reason nor nature, so that this soul willeth none of all the states of Paradise, though men laid them all in her choice. Nor they unwill‡ none of all the torments of hell. Though it were all at their pleasure to choose any of these aforesaid, they desire not nor they will not none of these."

"Ah, what then, for God?" saith Holy Church.

"This that she is," saith Love, "in her knowing."

"And what is this?" saith Holy Church.

* The reader is reminded of the interpretation of "being *with* herself," and the qualifying interpretation of "naught willing" (pp. 18, 44, 53, 109).

† Being conscious. ‡ *i.e.*, refuse.

"Right sweet Holy Ghost, teach it us!* for this word passeth our scriptures, and so we may not understand it by Reason, this that you say. And she hath so abashed us," saith Holy Church, "that we dare not be against her!"

"Oh, Holy Church," saith the Holy Ghost, "will you wit what this soul wot and what she willeth? I shall tell it you," saith the Holy Ghost. "She wot but one thing, that is, that she wot naught; and she willeth but one thing, that is, that she willeth naught; and this naught witting and naught willing giveth her," saith the Holy Ghost, "all the treasure fulfilled, that is closed in the Trinity, without end. "Not," saith the Holy Ghost, "by nature divine, for that may not be, but by the strength of love, for that behoveth to be."†

"Now Holy Church," saith Love, "here you have heard why this soul hath all."

"Sooth!" saith the Holy Ghost, "all that I have received of the Father and of the Son, who knoweth that she hath all that I have," saith the Holy Ghost, "and the Father and the Son have nothing but that I have it in me. Then hath this soul in her," saith the Holy Ghost, "the treasures fulfilled of the Trinity and enclosed within her."

* See note *infra*, p. 300.

† Introduction, pp. xliv-xlv.

"Now since it is thus," saith Holy Church to the Holy Ghost, "it behoveth the Trinity to dwell and live in her."

"This is right," saith the Holy Ghost, "for as much as she is dead to the world, and the world dead to her, that the Trinity [should] inhabit her."

"O very God, Holy Ghost!" saith Holy Church.

"Sooth," saith Love, "Holy-Church-under-this-Holy-Church! for such souls," saith Love, "be properly called 'Holy Church,' for they sustain and teach and nourish all Holy Church. Not only they," saith Love, "but all the Trinity, through them. This is sooth," saith Love, "of this let none doubt.

"Now, 'Holy-Church-under-this-Holy Church,'" saith Love, "what will you say of these, that be thus so much* above you, you that use in all after the counsel of Reason?"

"We will say," saith Holy-Church-the-less, "that these souls be in life above us, for Love dwelleth in them. And Reason dwelleth in us. Love leadeth them, and Reason leadeth us. But this is not against us," saith Holy-Church-the-little, "but we praise them among the glosses of our scriptures."†

* MS. "as best."

† See note *infra*, p. 301.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THIS SOUL BY ALL GIVING HATH ALL RECEIVED

"Ah, Lady Love," saith Reason, "we would pray you if it pleased you, more openly to speak of those gifts that the Holy Ghost giveth to such souls, of his pure goodness; so that no creature may be the worse,* through her rudeness, by hearing of the divine school."

"O Reason," saith Love, "alway thou art rude and blind, thou and all the disciples of thy doctrine; for he is full blind that hath things before his eyes and seeth them not; and thus seem ye!"

"I have said," saith the Holy Ghost, "that I shall give to this soul all that I have given," saith the Holy Ghost. "It is promised her of all the Trinity and granted of his bounty, in the knowledge of wisdom without beginning, all that we have. And this is good reason," saith the Holy Ghost, "that we withhold from such souls nothing that we have. For this soul," saith the Holy Ghost, "hath given us all that she hath of worth, and the same that we have, she herself hath given us by manner of

* MS. "have damage."

speech; for it is said, and sooth it is, that good will is accounted for deed.

"And this soul," saith the Holy Ghost, "is of such condition, that if she had in her the same that we have, she would yield it to us; all this—as we have it—without willing any guerdon in heaven nor in earth, but right according to our will alone.

"Now *We* have all this," saith the Holy Ghost, "of our very divine condition, and this she hath given us by way of a 'partie,'* that is, a thing in love of good will, in a game† of holy meaning. And for this," saith the Holy Ghost, "that this soul hath given us all that she hath, and all things that she hath not also, by way of a 'game,'* it behoveth," saith the Holy Ghost to Holy Church, "that she be given that which *We* have, by justice of love. We have in us," saith the Holy Ghost, "this that is ours by nature divine, and she hath it from us in her, by justice of love, whatever she may be!" saith the Holy Ghost.

"O Lord," saith Holy Church, "we understand it and believe it forsooth, that these be the gifts of your worthy noblesse, in reward of love; for love may not be rewarded at any time except with love."

* "By manner of partie," a share, side of a game. See *supra*, pp. xxviii and 302.

† MS. "dalliance."

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE BEING OF THIS SOUL. OF THE USAGE OF A SOUL THAT LANGUORETH FOR LOVE, AND IN WHAT POINT A SOUL IS, THAT IS DEAD IN LOVE; AND OF THE PROFIT AND PEACE OF NAUGHT WILLING

"THIS soul," saith Love, "hath of old said and heard that there is nothing that is so great knowledge as is temperance; nor so great riches as is sufficiency; nor so great strength as is love. This soul," saith Love, "hath her mind and understanding and will, low; all is one being, this is in God. And this Being giveth her being without knowing nor feeling, nor willing any being, but only the ordinance of God. This soul," saith Love, "hath many a day languored for love."

"O Lady Love," saith Reason, "what is the practice of a soul that languoreth for love?"

"She warreth at vices," saith Love, "by seeking virtues."

"Ah, soothly Love," saith this soul, "this is a great war, and a perilous! Ah, right sweet Love," saith this soul, "such life may well discreetly be called languor and life of war."

"Now she hath so much enlanguored for love," saith Love, "that she is dead in love."

"Ah, Lady Love," saith Reason, "for God, tell us this, in what point is a soul, that is dead in love?"

"She hath," saith Love, "taken end* at the world, and the world hath taken end at her. And so she liveth in God, and there may not the vices find her. She is so fulfilled in God that neither world nor flesh nor enemy may grieve her, for they may not find her in her works. So that this soul liveth in the rest of peace, for created things are naught to her. And because of this peace, the soul liveth in the world without grudging of conscience. Such a soul hath nothing of 'will'; for this being should be our being, for we have nothing more availing before God than this, that we leave our will for his will, and that we give perfectly our will to his will, without willing anything but only the measure of his work, according to the ordering of his bounty."

"To this I hold me,"† saith this soul, "here I lack nothing since I will naught; for none hath so much perfect peace as they only that have naught of will."

"That wit ye, Lady Soul," saith Love.

"Ah, without fail, so do I, Lady Love," saith this soul, "for I have perceived it by

* *i.e.*, bid farewell. † *i.e.*, I accept this.

certain proofs that I must be dead,* and so am I."†

They have no will that nothing will, and this soul hath her will given so that she hath naught whereof to will, but the will of him to whom she hath given her will. Such folk live in freedom of charity that have nothing of will: whosoever should ask them, what they would? in sooth they would say, "Nothing!"

CHAPTER IX

HOW THESE SOULS THAT THIS BOOK DEVISETH BE COME TO THE KNOWING OF THEIR NAUGHT; AND HOW BY THAT THEY BE COME INTO BELIEVING OF "MORE," AND HOW THIS IS MEANT

THESE that be such as this book deviseth, are come to the knowing of their naught; that is to say, they may not know of their naught by any thing that is in them, for their knowing is too little to know their loss; and so they are come by believing of "more."‡ And see here the knowledge of their believing!

* *i.e.*, mortified.

† An obscure passage in MS. "for myn þe his, me has y caste. . . ."

‡ *i.e.*, come by putting their trust in the "more," which is God himself.

It is this, that men may know naught. No, though men knew as much as men shall know in heaven, or that might, passing that, be compared by the comparison of a part; so that all this that men shall know, were naught in regard of the whole to which men compared it. They might not put in this comparison, either his power or his wisdom or his bounty, but without more, the knowing of one sole spark of his pure bounty. Also it should be naught, as in regard of the least part that dwelleth in him, that is not known but by him. That is, to understand it better, that whoso knew of him all that is said, it should be naught as in regard of the great knowledge that dwelleth in him beyond our knowing. The least part of his bounty is so great, in sooth, that men might compare, by manner of speech, all that they could, it should be naught in regard to the greatness of the least part of his bounty. We have not one spark of him in comparison with the all of him.

"Ah, ah, Lord God," saith this soul, "what shall the soul do that this believeth of him?"

"She shall do naught," saith God, "but I shall do my work in her without her. For by the knowing of her naught, and by the believing in me [comes] the putting her at naught, that she may naught do. So that

the knowing of this naught compared with the greatness of all, hath acquitted her and made her free, that she lacketh nothing. No soothly! for as much as she willeth naught."

Now is this soul come to knowing of "more," truly in this only, that she knoweth not of this naught-in-God, compared with the all-of-him.*

"Mercy God," saith Reason, "dare we call 'naught' anything that is in God?"

"Yea, and God wills,"† saith this soul.

"How then soothly is this will naught, that is given and shall be given of him to us? even though we had the same, that is said in this writing, by comparison, if it might be so, [that] all should be naught in regard of the greatness of one spark of his bounty, that dwelleth in the knowing of him, beyond our knowledge. Ah, ah," saith then this Soul, "how great, then, is the All of him, when this may be said of the least of him! O right sweet Love," saith this soul, "that only wit ye, and that sufficeth me."

"Now ye wit how this soul is come into believing of 'more,' and now shall I tell you," saith Love, "how she is come into knowing of her naught; by this, that she knoweth

* She does not even know her own "naught" in God, because she is absorbed in contemplation of his All.

† MS. An God wills = if.

that neither she nor others know [anything] of her horrible defaults as compared to that which is in the knowing of God."

CHAPTER X

OF THE PEACE OF THIS SOUL; AND HOW SHE IS ALL FREE BY NAUGHT WILLING; AND OF THE DIVERSITY OF NAUGHT WILLING AND WELL WILLING

"THIS soul," saith Love, "hath not withheld any will within her, she is fallen into naught-willing and into certainty of naught-witting, and this naught-willing and naught-witting hath stilled and wholly pacified her. This soul," saith Love, "holdeth the counsel of the Gospel that saith: 'Have the eye simple, and so shall ye not sin.'* And this soul is at peace concerning all that God suffered for her, for she hath true intention† in all her purposes, and peaceable rest concerning the deeds of her even-Christian. For in all things wherein she abandoneth judging, she maketh no judgement, except always for the best.‡ This soul hath in all places her peace, for she beareth always peace with her, so that for this peace, all places

* Cf. Matt. vi 22 and Luke xi 34.
† MS. "entente."
‡ *i.e.*, her judgements are always charitable.

be convenient to her, and all things also. So that this soul sitteth without moving herself, in the seat of peace, in the work of life, in virtues of good conscience, and in freedom of perfect charity; thus is she all free.

"Then willeth she naught," saith Love, "since she is made free; for he is not free that anything willeth according to the willing of his inwardness, how well soever he willeth; for so much he is servant to himself, that he hath a will that God do his will, to his own worship. And he that this other [thing] willeth, willeth it not, but only to fulfil the will of God in himself and in others. But for those folk," saith Love, "that work by their wills, they refuse God the realm."

"Eh, without fail," saith Reason, "so do they [indeed] !"

"So do they [refuse to yield themselves]," saith this freed soul, "but they ought to do so, or they should lose all the little cattle* that they have."

"This is sooth, Lady Soul," saith Reason, "I grant it you."

"These folk," saith Love, "that work thus by their wills, be not quit from thraldom. But that is without their witting, for they ween they be, and for that weening they are content with their state."

"They have so much pleasure in their

* Little cattle = small profit.

doings," saith this soul, "that they ween* there be no better, and that deceiveth them from coming to better; thus they stand, within,† in their good wills."

"Such folk," saith Love, "be never fulfilled."

"No, in soothness," saith this soul, "for because their wills dwell with them, they be servants to their wills. Into this servitude enter they," saith this soul, "that in all, they believe and follow these two virtues, Reason and Dread, for they nourish Will. But they alone be free," saith this soul, "that *be* free; whom Faith and Love govern, for they rest from all servitudes, without having dread of things redoubtable or desire of any very delectable [thing].

"This soul hath no will, nor is she troubled about what God may do, but only that she do his will alway. For this soul," saith Love, "recketh not of hell, nor of paradise, nor of thing that is made, she neither willeth nor unwilleth anything that is here said."

"Oh, what then, for God?" saith Holy-Church-the-little-with-all-his-rude-scripture.‡

"Nothing," saith Love, "she willeth

* Ween = deem, consider. † *i.e.*, enclosed.

‡ With-all-his-rude-scripture—*i.e.*, with all his mere rational, literal scripture, as apart from the understanding that comes by meditation and love.

naught. But this exercise seemeth to them that [exercise] will, to place them in great debt on account of the neglect of multiple opportunities of love.* And that is no marvel, but without fail none will believe how great loss this is to them, to whom this seemeth strange."

"Such folks," saith this soul, "be so blind, that great things seem little to them."

"It is sooth, this that ye say, right sweet soul," saith Love, "for right as the work of God is more than the work of man, right so is more worth this naught-willing in God, than well-willing for God! Yea! in sooth," saith Love, "though they might through this well-willing for God do miracles and receive every day martyrdom, it is," saith Love, "nothing in comparison to that, for as much as Will dwelleth in them.†

"No," saith Love, "though they were every day through this Will, ravished to see the Trinity, with Saint Paul the Apostle:‡ let me not speak of it," saith Love, "for I may not!"§

* MS. "great rerages of many multipliances of love."

† Cf. 1 Cor. xiii 3. ‡ Cf. 2 Cor. xii 1-5.

§ Love breaks off in impatience! "Though these self-seeking souls were rapt into the Trinity every day, yet they do not understand anything; it is nothing compared to the simple dependence of not-knowing and not-willing."

CHAPTER XI

OF THE UNION OF LOVE

THIS soul is printed in God, she hath taken his very imprint, by union of love, in the manner that the wax taketh the form of the seal, so hath this soul taken the print of God and his very likeness.

This soul saith thus: "However well God loveth me as he hath showed by his divine work and the suffering of his manhood, he loveth me not," saith this soul, "against himself. Though he died for all and took flesh and blood of mankind, this was to witness thereby to his bounty, for he owed me this since his Divine will willed it. Because of this," saith this soul, "he loveth me not against himself; for though all these that the Trinity hath wrought in his [knowledge] should have been damned without end; Jesu Christ, the Son of God the Father, hath not, in sooth, granted to save all."

"Oh, ah me!" saith this soul, "from whence came it to me this to say? Eh, does not every man know that this may not be? but ye Love, say it yourself!"*

* This extremely obscure passage seems to be a plea for free will. God's image imprinted on the soul does not force the soul to yield up "the

"Dear friend," saith the Person of God the Father, "this ought to be done to mine eldest daughter, who is out of my realm,* so that she may know the secrets of my Son through the love of the Holy Ghost, that to this soul hath given this [knowledge] from him."

"It behoveth," saith Love, "that this soul be like to the Deity, for she is drawn into him, so she hath taken his very form, which to her was granted without beginning, and given of him that alway hath loved her."

"O Love," saith this soul, "he only hath made me [to be] no-one; and this naught of this none hath put me in a low deepness, under less than naught, without measure; and the knowing of my naught hath given me all, and this naught and this all," saith this Soul," hath taken prayer from me. I pray not."

"O what do ye then, right sweet soul, tell us?" saith Holy-Church-the-little-with-all-his-rude-scripture.

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realm." The corollary is apparently the argument for "predestination," which the soul puts forward strongly in order to contradict it immediately—according to the method of the *jeu-parti*. God the Father shows that this soul that dwells in "will," and cannot otherwise be forced to give up will, can be won by this "imprint" of love made by the Holy Ghost.

* Cf. *supra*, p. 114.

"I rest me in peace," saith this naked naughted soul, "all in the courtesy of his sole bounty, without turning me to one single desire, notwithstanding all the riches that he hath in him. This is the end," saith this soul, "of my work, always naught to will. And forasmuch as I will naught," saith this soul, "I am a solitary soul, and separate from myself,* and all free. And when I will anything," saith this soul, "then am I *with* myself so, and have I lost freedom, but when I will naught, and have all lost out of my will, then faileth me nothing; free-being is my maintainer.† I will naught of none!"

"Ah, right precious sweet being," saith Love, "that hast all usages lost, and by this lost usage, hast ceased from all methods;‡ for in sooth, these usages and this loss be made in the naughting of your soul, and in this naught, ye swoon," saith Love, "and dwell dead. But ye shall love, my friend," saith Love, "in his will, for in you he hath made his chamber secret, it pleaseth him there to dwell. O right well born," saith Love, "to this precious day's eye,§ and ye

* MS. "An alone soul and without me and all free."

† *i.e.*, liberty is my sole support. I need no other.

‡ MS. "usage withholden."

§ The Latin version has a marginal note: "heliotropium, a flour that height a deysy or merygold."

are truly in free [hold] dwelling, where none entereth except he be of your lineage without bastardise.

" This soul," saith Love, " is entered into the flood or waves of divine love. Not," saith Love, " by the efforts to reach to divine knowledge, for it may not be that any understanding, however illumined, might attain to any of the influences of divine love; but the love of this divine soul is conjunct, clad, and arrayed in this ' more ' of this passing divine love. Not by the reaching out of the understanding of love, but by the reaching and attaining of more praise* of right passing love. This soul," saith Love, " is so arrayed with the clothings of this passing peace wherein she liveth and endureth, and was, and is, and shall be, without her being. For right thus," saith Love, " as the iron is clothed with fire and hath lost its own semblance by the greater strength of that which hath turned it unto itself, right so is the soul clothed of the ' more,' and is all turned and drawn into this ' more,' for the [sake of the] love of ' more,' of heavenly amiable peace, without paying of duty.† This soul," saith Love, " liveth in the sweet country of passing peace, there is nothing that may help nor grieve them that live

* MS. " heres."
† MS. " truage," O.F. *treuage*, tax, *impôt*.

there, neither creature wrought, nor thing given, nor nothing that God commandeth."

"Eh, what then, for God?" saith Reason.

"This, that never was, nor is, nor shall be given, that none here maketh," saith Love, "this hath put her at naught. Except for this, that is, praise of the thing that is, she willeth no help nor sparing, nor of his might, nor of his wisdom, nor of his bounty."

"This it is," saith this soul, "that faulteth me not, and this hath given me peace. I live but with the peace that is gotten or born of these two gifts in my soul, without thought. This might I not do except he had given it me. This is mine all and my best; and the virtue of this gift maketh me have one being, one will, one love, and one work in two natures. Such power hath the union of the unity of [the] divine indwelling."

CHAPTER XII

OF TWO BEHOLDINGS OF THIS SOUL, AND HOW THEY THAT WILL UNDERSTAND THIS BOOK MUST BE DEAD OF ALL DEATHS

"THIS soul," saith Love, "suffereth the dead to bury the dead, and the marred* to

* Marred, Latin translation *propediti*. Later on the contrast of "perished, marred, and those in life of spirit" is fully worked out. Cf. Division VI

work the works of virtues. And so resteth she, of less and more, that is, of all thing. The ' most ' showeth to this soul her naught, without covering, and that showeth her the almightful in the bounty of divine righteousness. So beholdeth she the deep by the deep, and by the high, the highful and sure one; for they do ever unite the all and the nothing,* as long as she hath it in her beholding."

" Ah, right sweet soul, deep in lowness, full of entire meekness, and right clean and pure in the pleasure of plain truth, and by love of passing ' more ' alone perfected, except for them of your demesne," saith Reason, " tell us what these dark words, that fine love toucheth, mean."

" Reason," saith this soul, " this that is said to you, ye hear it, but never ye understand it! And so have your questions lengthened† this book, through the examples that cannot be explained but in plain and hasty words. But your questions have made them long, because ye have need thereof yourself, and for your disciples,‡ those of your household who have fly's hearts!"

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following. The " marred " stands for the class that work out their salvation by the ways of virtues.

* MS. " one all and none."

† MS. " shent."

‡ MS. "nourisch" = those under her care, " ward."

"You have opened [it],"* saith Love, "so that Reason and all his scholars may not be there against."

"That this seemeth not well said to them, however much it be according to understanding, this is sooth," saith this soul, "but they only understand it whom fine love teacheth, and they only wot what this book meaneth. But him behoveth to be dead, and mortified of all deaths, that finely should understand it," saith this soul, "for none tasteth of this life unless he be dead of all deaths."

* *i.e.*, explained it.

DIVISION VI

CHAPTER I

OF THEM THAT BE PERISHED, AND IN WHAT, AND OF WHAT, AND FOR WHAT

"AH, treasurer soul!" saith Reason, "for God, tell us of how many deaths behoveth you to die, ere that ye understand finely this book?"

"Ask it of Love," saith this soul, "for she knows the truth."

"Ah, Lady Love," saith Reason, "mercy! tell it us! Not for me, nor for my disciples, but for them that have taken leave of me, that this book may bear light—if God will!"

"Reason," saith Love, "those under your teaching have yet much to do [to come to the understanding] of the two deaths in which this soul is dead, but the third death understandeth none alive, but they of the mountain."

"O Lady Love," saith Reason, "tell us this, what folk be they of the mountain?"

"They have not in earth," saith Love, "shame nor worship nor dread for thing that may befall."

"Eh," saith Reason, "Lady Love, for

God, answer us our questions, ere you say anything more; for I am a-wondered to hear the life of these souls."

"Reason," saith Love, "they that see this book, that have the being of this life, understand it well—save this, that it behoveth them expound the glosses. But some things shall I expound to thy questions. There be," saith Love, "two manner of people that live the life of perfection, by the works of virtues, in affection of the life of spirit. This is the life [of the first] of them, who in all, mortify the body, in doing works of charity. And they have so great pleasure in their works, that they have no knowing that there is any better being than the being of works of virtue and deaths of martyrdom, and they desire to persevere in this by help of meditations fulfilled with prayers, in multiplied means of good will, alway. And because of the opinion that these people hold thus, that this is the best of all beings that may be, therefore this people," saith Love, "be blinded, and so they perish in their works. Because of the sufficiency that they have in their doings, this people," saith Love, "be called Kings; but this is a being where everyone is blinded; but, without fail, those that *have* two eyes take them* for servants," saith this soul, "but

* *i.e.*, the Kings.

that is without their knowing. They fare like the crow that weeneth there be none so fair a bird in the wood as his bride, the crow. Right so I tell you," saith this soul, " of these that live in desire alway, they hold that there is no Being that attaineth to the Being of desire, wherein this people be always and will to dwell, for they may not believe that there is any so good. And therefore they perish in the way, that suffice themselves so in this, which desire and will giveth them."

" O God," say the Virtues, " Lady Love, who shall bear us witness, of this that you say, that those who live all by our own counsel, perish ? So say none of the Masters of us,"* say the Virtues to Love. " We understand this well, that it is said of evil Christians; for we hope fully that none may perish who in all things do our teaching, by help of desire, which giveth a true feeling of Jesu Christ. This we believe perfectly, without doubt, Lady Love !" say the Virtues.

" You say sooth in this," saith Love, " but in the understanding lieth the mystery; for therein lieth the winning of divine love."

" We believe it, Love !" say the Virtues, " but this is not of our office, that we should understand it. We be excused, provided

* *i.e.*, the authorities in the ascetical or mystical books.

we believe you by the understanding that we have; for we be made of you, to serve such souls."

"Oh, without fail," saith this soul to Virtues, "it is well said, men may well believe you, and therefore I tell you," saith this soul, "and all those that hear this book, that whoso serveth a poor lord, since a long time, poor allowances shall he have, and little wages. Right so fareth it by Virtues; they have well acknowledged it in hearing of you all, that they understand not the Being of fine love!"

"And for this, I tell you," saith this soul, "how should the Virtues teach the subject a thing that they have not, nor never shall have? But whoever will understand it and learn how they perish who dwell in Virtues, [let him] ask it of Love. Soothly of that Love that is Mistress of Knowing, not of that Love that is Daughter of Knowing, for she knoweth never; but of that Love that is Mother of the Knowing of Divine Light. She knoweth the All; and the More of All, in which More, the free soul is rested and dwelleth; she may not otherwise do, but in the All make dwelling."

"Now have ye heard, who are the 'perished,' and in what, and of what, and for what."

DIVISION VII

CHAPTER I

OF THEM THAT BE MARRED, AND WHAT DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN THE PERISHED AND THE MARRED

NOW we will tell you also which be the marred. These be they who are servants and merchants and seekers; but they be more wise than they that be perished.*

"O Lady Love, that all things maketh light, tell us," saith this soul, "why they work in Virtues as well as the perished, and serve them, and feel and desire and run by burning of cutting desire in the work of the spirit? And so do the perished as the marred do.† Where is that 'best,' for

* These distinctions are based on a Patristic treatise which I have so far failed to identify. It is, in general, the doctrine of Clement of Alexandria, *In Stromata*.

† Marred, Latin translation, *propediti*, for which Ducange gives *impedire*, *cohibere*; O.S. merrian, to cause to stumble; O.E. merrar, to hinder, stop, compress; hence the sense of spoil and ruin. The marred life is a life hindered and arrested in the early stages by this adherence to a self-centred pursuit of

which ye allow them more than the perished ?"

" Where is it ?" saith Love. " They have indeed a being, and that a right good being, to come to the best being that we speak of, to which the perished can have no succour."

M. This word " perished," may not be taken for perishing of the perdition of soul, that they should not be saved, but it is to mean, right as Love saith, they lean so upon their own works, weening that it is best so, that they continue to follow none other, and therefore they may not attain to the highest; but for the least they lose the best, therefore he calleth them " perished "; not for the works, but for their satisfaction [in them]. *N.*

" O Love of divine Love," saith this free soul, " now tell us why these marred have so great wit beyond what the perished have, for they have the same usage except in that wit alone for which ye praise them above the other."

" For this," saith Love, " that they hold that there is a better being than is their

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the " Virtues." It may come to mean spoilt, ruined; but this treatise shows that, even on its own lines, by a modification of method, it may still be raised to perfection. Cf. Division IX, chaps. ii and xiii; and chap. iv of Division VII.

being, and these know well that they have no knowing of that better being. This they believe, and this believing giveth them so little satisfaction in their being, that they hold themselves as caitiffs, and as marred.* And so they are, without fail, as compared to the free being of the Settled, that never move. And because they hold themselves as marred, they ask oftentimes by the way, by burning desire, of her that wot, that is, Damsel Knowing-enlumined-of-divine-grace; and these have little of their questions. This wit they that have been marred. She teacheth them the right way royal, by the country of not-willing, that is the true address. And those who thus address themselves wot if I say the truth. And this people that thus be marred, hold themselves for caitiffs, and so they be, but they may come to the free being, the which we speak of, by the teaching of this divine light, of whom these little [ones] that be marred, ask the dressing of their way."

"Little?" saith Reason, "yet little?"

"Yea, yet little," saith the Holy Ghost, "in sooth, as long as they make askings either of Knowing or of Love, or do anything that may be in love,† or in knowing, or in craving, for no wise man prayeth without

* *i.e.*, spoilt.

† *i.e.*, with motives of self-seeking love, etc.

cause, nor careth he for that which may not be.* Therefore it may well be said, that they be little that often ask, but those be lords that nothing ask nor crave, for all beings, whatever they be, are but as strong as a reed,† and a default as compared to the sovereign Being of naught-willing; where the free in their right being may not remove, nor will, nor nothing ask, for nothing that men may do; but give all that they may, to love truly and keep."

CHAPTER II

OF A SWIFT OPENING AND OF A HASTY SHUTTING THAT THE FAR NIGHT GIVETH TO THIS SOUL; AND WHAT THIS FAR NIGHT IS

"AH, God," saith Reason, "what thing hath aneantised‡ these souls?"

"This," saith Love, "they give all that God holds worthy. He that is thus, is neither perished nor marred. But she is settled in the fifth state§ with her Beloved,

* *i.e.*, if he asks it implies he has it not, and therefore he is "little." Careth = takes trouble.

† MS. "the maintenance of a resche."

‡ *i.e.*, destroyed, annihilated. O.F. *anéanti*.

§ These "estates" refer to St Augustine's Seven Degrees of preparation for the knowledge of God in *De Quantitate Animae*. The fifth is "peace of

there faulteth her nothing. And so is she oft into the sixth state ravished; only a little while it endureth, for this is a work of the Beloved, which is a swift opening and a hasty shutting; in that state may none long dwell. He had never mother that of this can speak.

" From this ravishable opening, and at the spreading of this opening, the soul hath taken her shutting and abideth in the peace of this work, right free and noble, and discharged of all encumbrances and of all things, as long as the peace endureth that is given in this opening. And after the shutting, she keepeth herself freely in the fifth estate without falling into the fourth, for in the fourth estate is will, and in the fifth estate is none. And because the fifth estate, of which this book speaketh, hath naught of will, the soul dwelleth there, after the work of the far night. This is an high, heavenly ravishing, which is a swift opening and an hasty shutting. None may believe," saith Love, " the peace on peace of this, unless he be the same."

Understand these words for love, auditors of this book, and principally of this ' far

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soul, tranquillity. The sixth, Entrance into light, temporary. The seventh, Contemplation proper, habitual."

night,' that we call *celestrum esclistrum*,* a manner of a swift opening and a hasty shutting, that taketh the soul in the fifth estate, and putteth her in the sixth estate, as long as the work endureth. This is another than the fifth, but little while it dureth in the sixth, then is she again put in the fifth.

"She marvelleth," saith Love, "at the work of the far night. This is none other thing but very glory of heaven. It dwelleth not long in any creature, but only in the space of its moving, and therefore is this gift noble and good," saith Love that doeth this work. "Before the soul indwelleth, in the time of my work," saith Love, "when I work it, it is so delicious that truth calleth it, glorious food. But none may be fed with this heavenly meat that in desire dwelleth."

CHAPTER III

OF THE THREE LIVES OF THE SOUL, WHICH BE BORN IN MORTIFYING OF THREE THINGS—VIZ., OF SIN, OF NATURE, AND OF SPIRIT, AND HOW THIS SOUL IS ALWAY *WITHOUT*-HER

"THESE souls," saith Love, "govern a country, they be well above and all without them. At the first beginning, this soul lived

* O.F. *esclistre celestre*, heavenly lightning, or ray of heavenly brightness.

in the life of grace, the which life of grace is born in the death of mortifying sin. And after," saith Love, "she lived in the life of spirit, which life of spirit is born in the death of mortifying nature. And now she liveth of the life of glory, the which life of glory is born in the death of mortifying the spirit.*

"This soul," saith Love, "that liveth of the life of glory, is alway without-her."

"O Love," saith Reason, "when is this soul without-her and when is she with-her?"

"She is without-her," saith Love, "when she is in nothingness, neither in God, nor in herself, nor in her even-Christian, but in the naughting that this far night worketh in her. Concerning the approach of this work that is so precious and noble; even as men may no more speak of the opening of the movings of glory that the gentle far night giveth, so no more can this soul tell of this precious shutting. Then doth she forget by the deadening of this working, which this naughting yieldeth to herself."

"O God," saith this soul, "he that might comprehend the profit of one moment of this naughting, what a great lord he were!"

"This is sooth," saith Love, "he should be the same [kind of person]."

* Cf. St John of the Cross.

CHAPTER IV

OF THE FIRST DEATH THAT A SOUL MUST DIE ERE SHE COME TO THE SECOND LIFE—VIZ., THE DEATH OF SIN, AND WHICH COMPLEXION HATH BEST HELP TO UNDERSTANDING

"If ye have heard in this book high matters," saith this soul to the auditors of this book, "let it not displease you concerning this, though I speak of a little thing, for I must do it if I am to fulfil the [explanation of the] takings in the fulness of my purpose. Not," saith she, "for them that have attained, but for them that have not, that shall—so God will; but always they shall missay, till they be the same.—I come again to my matter."

"Reason," saith Love, "ye ask of us, of how many deaths it behoveth one to die before he come to this life? I speak," saith Love, "of three deaths, into which they enter, ere the soul may into this life be born. The first is the death of sin, as it is before said. Then, the soul ought to die entirely, so that there dwell not in her neither colour, nor savour, nor smell of nothing that God forbiddeth in the Law. And they that thus die be folks who live by grace. And that sufficeth them to salvation, together with

this, namely, that they keep themselves from all that God forbiddeth, and do that which God commandeth. O right noble folks, naughted and upraised* by conjunction of union with divine love, let it not displease you if I touch something for them that be little! I shall speak enough afterwards of your being. For it falleth oftentimes that when white and black are come together, the one may be seen the better from the other; for white seemeth more white by black, and black by white. O haste you to understand, ye that be chosen and called to this sovereign being, for it is a full great way between the first estate of life of grace to the last estate of life of glory, which the gentle far night giveth. I have said," saith Love, "that ye [should] understand it and that ye haste you thereto, for without strong understanding, subtle and right noble, none may reach it. The sanguine have help by nature, to this, and those who are hasty, of fervent will, of the burning desire of the spirit, the choleric; [all these] have help in this, by nature. And when these two natures thus accord, and the third nature that must join to these two natures without end, be righteousness, [then] this is the gladness of glory that draweth them by nature into his nature, by rightwiseness. This accordance is finely noble."

* MS. "uphanused."

CHAPTER V

OF A QUESTION THAT LOVE ASKED: WHICH IS THE MOST NOBLE; THE SOUL IN GLADNESS OF GLORY, OR THE SOUL THAT IS ONED TO THIS GLORY? AND HOW THEY THAT HAVE THE FEELINGS OF THIS BOOK MUST KEEP IT SECRET, AND A LITTLE TOUCHING OF THE SEVENTH STATE

"I ASK you a question: which is the most noble of these twain, the soul in gladness of that glory which draweth the soul, and embellisheth it by obedience to its nature, or that soul that to this glory is oned?"

"I know not," saith the soul that this first wrote, "but Love, you yourself, say it for me! I may not amend you. Excuse me, for jealousy of love, and work of charity in which I am encumbered, have made this book, to the end that ye that read this book without abiding,* may at least share the same in will, if ye have it not yet.† And if ye be disencumbered of all things, and be folk without will, in life [desirable], tell few your understandings of the things of this book."

* Hastily.

† *i.e.*, may participate by will and desire if there is no actual experience yet of the state described.

"I have said," saith Love, "that this is a life of more high understanding, one beyond the other without comparison, for right as it is a little comparison to say a drop of water compared with all the sea, the sea is full great against the drop; even so it is, to speak of the first estate of grace, as compared with the second, and right so of the second compared to the others; it hath naught of comparison. Just as I have made a little ensample afore, the better to understand, of the sea and of a drop, yet not therefore is there any so great estate in the four estates, but the soul [nevertheless] doth live in great servitude therein; but the fifth is freed by charity, for it is uncumbered of all things, and the sixth is glorious, because of the openings of the swift movings of glory, which the gentle far night giveth. And that is none other thing than some gleam that God willeth that the soul have of his glory [itself], which she is to have without end. So, of his bounty, he [giveth] the shewing of the seventh estate to which the sixth giveth being. And this showing is given so swiftly that the person to whom this gift is given hath, at the time, no perceiving of her gift."

"What marvel is it," saith this soul, "though I perceive it not? for in the time that this gift was given, I was, by bounty

divine, of the same nature as the gift itself. And it should be given me without end, if my body had left my soul."

"There is no need for that," saith the Spouse of this soul himself.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT THIS "FAR NIGHT" IS, AND OF THE KNOWING THAT IT GIVETH TO THE SOUL

"I HAVE, by my far night, sent letters to you; but none asketh, 'What is this far night?' When he showeth his glory to the soul, his works may not be told! But this—What the far night is? It is the Trinity himself, that showeth the same movings of the Trinity itself. The Trinity openeth to this soul and showeth her of his glory, of which none can speak but he, the same. And the soul to whom this far night hath given this gift, hath so great knowing of God and of herself, and of all things that she seeth in God's being, by divine knowing. And the light of this divine knowing taketh from her the knowing of God's self, and of herself, and of all things."*

* The divine "ray" (rastro, apparitio) gives knowledge of God's essence and of the soul's nothingness, so blinding, that afterwards the soul is left without *conscious* knowledge of God or herself. The distinction is between the flash of immediate know-

"This is sooth," saith this soul, "there is no more; but when God wills that I know him, it taketh the knowledge of him from me; for otherwise," saith this soul, "should I no knowing have of him. And I see that I know myself, and that taketh from me also the knowing of myself, for otherwise might I no knowing have of myself."

"This is sooth," saith Love, "what you say, Lady Soul. There is nothing more profitable, nor more sure to have than to know this."

CHAPTER VII

OF THE THREE DEATHS BY THE WHICH THESE SOULS COME TO THE LIFE AFORESAID

"Now, Reason," saith Love, "understand! I come again for a little, touching to our matter. This people that we have spoken of that be dead from deadly sin and be in life of grace have no scruples; but they acquit them towards God only of that which he commandeth. They desire, indeed, worship, and sorry be they if men despise

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ledge and the ensuing darkness, or unconsciousness or state of oblivion, or disinterested self-forgetfulness, all of which are the very conditions of further knowledge.

them, but they keep themselves from vainglory and from impatience that leadeth to death of sin. They love riches, and sorry be they when they be poor, and if they be rich, sorry be they when they lose; but always they keep themselves from the death of sin; for they will not love their riches against the will of God, neither in winning them nor in losing them. And they love ease and rest for their pleasures, but they keep themselves from the inordinances thereof. These folk be dead from deadly sin and born to the life of grace."

"Eh, without fail," saith this soul in freedom, "these folks be little in earth, and right little in heaven and uncourteous! Wit it well!"

"O Lady Soul," saith Reason, "beware what you say! We dare not say that any is little, whom God shall look upon without end."

"Sooth it is," saith Love, "a hand may not write the littleness of them as compared with the greatness of those that be dead of the death of nature and live of the life of spirit."

"I believe it well," saith Reason, "and so do they. They believe me well, but they will do nothing; they say to me," saith Reason, "that they are not obliged thereto unless they wish it; for God hath not com-

manded it to them but counselled it, without more."

"They say sooth," saith this soul, "these most uncourteous [ones]!"

"Oh, without fail," saith our Lord Jesu Christ, "uncourteous be they! They have forgot that anything that I did for them sufficed me not unless I had done all that mine humanity might bear, unto the death."

"Ah, right sweet Lord Jesu Christ!" saith the soul, "do not trouble yourself thereof, nor displease yourself, for these souls be so *for* themselves, and *with* themselves, that they forget you, for the littleness of themselves, in which they suffice themselves."

"Oh," saith Love, "without fail it is great villainy!"

"This people," saith this soul, "be merchants; in the world they be called thralls, for thralls they be, for it behoveth not to any gentleman to be able to meddle with merchandise, nor to be one of them. But I shall tell you," saith this soul, "wherein I am appeased concerning this people; in this, Lady Love, that they be out of the court of your secrets, right as a churl is out of a gentleman's court, in judgement at Paris, for there may none be admitted unless he be of gentle lineage and nameable in the

king's court.* And in this I rest me," saith this soul, " for even so, they be driven out of the court of your secrets, there where these others be called, who never forget the works of your sweet courtesy, that is, the despites and poverties, and the torments unsufferable that ye have suffered for us; they forget never the gifts of your sufferings, it is alway as a mirror and ensample to them."

" To these folks," saith Love, " are ordained all necessary things, for God commandeth them in the Gospel. These," saith Love, " be much more courteous than be the other foresaid, and nevertheless," saith Love, " yet be they little; so little that none can see it, as compared with the greatness of them that be dead of life of spirit, and be in the life of glory. Of this life tasteth none unless he be dead of the life of spirit."

" These souls," saith Truth, " bear the flower of the love of the Deity. There is no mean† between them and the Deity, nor no mean desire they; these souls may not suffer the thanking of any earthly love, nor

* The exclusion of " non-gentlemen " from the king's court, and the reference to the system at Paris helps to substantiate the evidence for a French original. The Latin translation has: *de curia vestrorum archanorum expulsi sunt, rusticus est extra curia generosi in iudicio apud parisiis.*

† *i.e.*, intermediary.

the love of divine feelings, for the pure divine love that this soul hath to Love."

"This sole power* of love," saith Love, "giveth her the deepness, the rest, and the stillness, and also it giveth her the flame and the burning of the working of love; witness of Love himself.

"This is sooth," saith Love, "this love of which we speak is the union of love, and fire enflamed that burneth without smoke; she dare not dread, for now worketh her Beloved."

Now have ye heard something of these three deaths by the which these souls come to these three lives.

* MS. "only daunger."

DIVISION VIII

CHAPTER I

WHO BE THEY THAT SIT IN THE MOUNTAIN, AND WHAT THINGS SHAME, DREAD, AND REASON DO TO THIS SOUL

"NOW I shall tell you who those be that sit in the mountain above the wind and the rains. These be they that have in earth neither shame nor worship, nor dread for thing that befalleth. Such folks," saith Love, "be folks full sure, their gates be open, and within none may grieve, nor can any work of charity come to naught;* such folks sit in the mountain, and none other but they."

"Oh for God," saith Reason, "Lady Love, this tell us. What shall become of Shame, that is the fairest daughter that Meekness hath; and Dread also, she who, to this lady, hath done so many fair services? And I ask," saith Reason, "for I never slept when she of me had need. Alas," saith Reason, "shall we now be put out of her house because that she is come to lordship?"

* MS. "ne dare downfall."

"Nay," saith Love, "ye shall dwell as of her household all three, but it shall be at her gate, for her gate shall have three porters, so that if any will in her house do aught that is against love, that each of you defend* it. And in none other usage than in this only point, show not the door at which ye be porters, that it do you not confusion; for in other point ye shall not be heard, but in this one only point, if it so befall that she be brought so low that she have of this need."

CHAPTER II

WHAT POWER THE FREEDOM OF LOVE HATH, AND WHEREOF THIS SOUL IS MOST GLAD

THIS creature is naked, and she is clothed with the life of glory that we have spoken of. Also, she is naked from her body, for as the skin [of an animal] is made naked of bodily clothing, right so is her spirit naked from her body, so that it is not in the body, for the sensuality of her body is worn away and delivered by divine works. So that this soul is naked, and is in the sweet country unknown, more verily than she is in her proper body, there where she giveth life, such power hath the freedom of love.

* Perhaps "forbid," translated literally from F. "defend."

"Ah, right sweet divine love," saith Holy-Church-the-little, in birth right little!—"it shall not be long thereto, that it shall come to an end."

Saith this soul, "Then shall be great gladness!"

"Now," saith Reason to this soul, "tell me whereof ye be most glad!"

"Lady Love," saith this soul, "shall say it for me."

"Of this," saith Love, "that she hath taken leave of you and of other virtues. Now she is so upheld and so entered into divine election, that she beginneth to speak where you take your end. But this election is not put in writing of men's hands, but of the Holy Ghost, who writeth this election marvellously in the soul, and the soul is thereunto precious parchment. There is the divine school held with closed mouth, that no wit of man may put into speech."

CHAPTER III

OF THE COUNTRY THAT THIS SOUL IS IN

"Ah, Love," saith Reason, "say among us something of the country where this soul dwelleth."

"Thus it is," saith Love, "where this soul is, of him, in him, for him; that is,

without receiving from any, but purely from him. Now *is* this soul," saith Love, "in him, of him, for him; that is, without receiving any but only from him."

"Then is she in God the Father," saith Truth, "for we know well that there is no person in the Trinity that hath not received something from another person beside his own person, save only the person of God the Father."

"Ye say sooth," saith Love, "for God the Father hath divine might in him without receiving might of any other but of himself. And he giveth to his Son the same that he hath in himself, and the Son receiveth it from the Father, and is equal to him. Now, of the Father and of the Son is the Holy Ghost, one person in Trinity. And he waxeth not,* but *is*; for otherwise is the Son of the Father, and otherwise is the Holy Ghost of the Father and of the Son. This soul," saith Love, "is taken in and put in her due place, knit and oned in the high Trinity so she may not will but the divine will, by the divine work of all the Trinity. And a ravishing deep light toucheth her and pierceth her and feedeth her of the most nigh."†

* Waxeth = becomes.
† Possibly "high."

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE USAGE OF REASON IS FULL OF TRAVAIL, AND WHERE THIS FREE SOUL REFRESHETH HER

THIS Soul saith thus: "Ah, ye right little people, rude and ill-mannered," saith she.

"To whom speak ye?" saith Reason.

"To all those," saith she, "that live by your counsel, that be so bestial and so assed, that I am obliged for their rudeness to make answer [in] my language, that they take not death in that state of life, where I am of him, in him, without craving or begging. I say that I am obliged to answer [in] my language, what I have learned of secrets at the secret court of God, where courtesy is law, and love measure, and bounty is food. The sweetness draweth me, the beauty pleaseth me; what, then, can I desire more, than to live at peace?"

"O right sweet flower without lack," saith Reason. "What do you think concerning our usages?"

"Meseemeth," saith this soul, "that it is a travail full of synagogues; their labours are all to gain their bread, and their sustenances. And this synagogue that our Lord Jesu Christ bought with his precious Body,

that heareth not the bestiality of those who, in this travail, please themselves thus.* But these [others] need certainty, and Jesu Christ will not lose them, as he himself hath assured them, by his death, and by the evangelists, and by their scriptures, where that folks of labour refresh themselves."

"Oh, where do *you* refresh yourself, right sweet Lady Soul, tell us!" saith Reason, "ye that do nothing of labour in this synagogue, but by love and faith that be above these other gifts?"

"No, soothly," saith this soul, "I am of that acquit; [in] other ways I refresh myself, that are so far from that doing, that it may not be laid in comparison, nor put in speech. In God is this choice, but it is not of Time, where mine may not attain to his."

M. Lo, the free soul saith that she addresseth her in other ways than they of labour do; and this is so far from that doing, that it may not be put into speech. In God is this choice, but it is not of Time. This is in the time of ravishing and union in God; it hath nothing of Time, for it lasteth but a little while in any creature here in this world, for the corruption of the flesh hindereth it, so that the soul may not long here abide. So then,

* MS. "thus savour."

heretics may not it attain, for their sensuality will not suffer it.

Also, a heretic [soul] may not attain to him for all the wit and understanding that she hath or might have, she may not reach to the knowing of his might, nor of his wisdom, nor of his goodness. Thus a heretic may not reach him in no wise.

Right thus, all such words must be declared within themselves [by them] that read this book. For [concerning] these dark words and high matters darkly spoken in this writing, [this] is done for to make the souls of the readers that be disposed to ghostly feelings to circle and ensearch by subtlety of wit, to come to these divine understandings, by the which they may be the more able to receive and follow these heavenly usages of God's work.

In divers places of this book the free soul reproveth, in a manner, those that be ghostly, that stand alway in labours and in such manner [of] doing outwardly, and will no further seek inwards, [to this purpose], that they should stint sometimes, and follow these restful usages of pure love. Thus saith the prophet in Holy Writ: *Stint ye sometime and behold God*,* as who saith, "Rest sometime from your

* Ps. xlv 11, *Vacate et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.*

own works of outward labours, and behold God how good he is, and suffer him to work in you." Also this soul that sitteth full high in the seat of peace, she saith that she prayeth not. This is not to be understood that this soul prayeth never, but in sundry practices that she hath, she prayeth never as thus. These souls of this disposition be drawn at other times to behold God's privy works, his judgements, and his providences. Then with true love they print so their wills in God's will, by meek obedience, that they cannot pray in this time for themselves, nor for none other. It pleaseth them best that it be as God will have it done, [even] though they might, by their prayer, have it any otherwise, they offer all unto his divine ordering and will. Also in other usages that be all inward, they pray not neither, but it all prayeth afore God.* But yet they pray in common, by the rule and ordinance of Holy Church, and in all things unite alway their will to his will, who hath made and bought them. But they never do bodily works, nor they may not during the time of such divine usages.† Therefore it must be taken,

* *i.e.*, it is all prayer before God.

† The "bodily works" refer to works of piety over and above that which is commanded—*i.e.*, extra

as for the time always, of the usages. Thus this book must be taken as concerning these "usages." For such usages and such touches, such movings and such beholdings these souls have, as it is written in this book, and many more, forsooth, as ye may well conceive. And now I shall stint of my words unless there be more need. I have answered those points that have been mistaken, according to my simple learning. Another should have done it much better. I pray you all that read this book, have me excused, for that I am simple and unlearned and may not do but ignorantly. Amend ye my defaults, and if any word I have said tendeth to any goodness, to the profit of souls, to God only be the worship from whom all goodness cometh. *Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.** *N.*

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fastings, vigils, penances, hearing of many masses, saying of many vocal prayers. Cf. earlier part of the book. It is distinctly stated that this abstention from "bodily works" is the fruit of that particular "state" into which the soul has been led, and applies strictly only to the soul, while it is in this condition —*i.e.*, "usage." The word "usage" means sometimes the habitual practices of devotion at any one point of the soul's development, sometimes the condition itself, "a divine usage" as implying God's act in the soul.

* Ps. cxiii 9.

"Now, Reason," saith this soul, "you asked me where I address myself? To him only," saith this soul, "that is so strong that he may never die, whose doctrine may not be written, nor by works of ensamples showed, nor by doctrine sounded. He wist without beginning that I should believe him well, without witnessing. It is right great villainy to covet any witness in love. This seemeth to me, that so as love is, he is to me witness enough, if I would have more witness than him, I should not be believing him."

"Ah, Lady Soul," saith Reason, "ye have two laws, yours and ours. Yours for love and ours for belief; therefore say what ye will!" saith Reason, "and call our wards, 'beast's asses.'"

CHAPTER V

[IN] WHAT MANNER THEY SEEK GOD THAT BE GOVERNED BY REASON, AND WHERE THIS SOUL SEEKETH HIM, AND WHAT THIS SOUL IS

"SUCH folks," saith this soul, "that I call asses, seek God in creatures and by hills and dales, and beg and crave; and paradise is not wrought by that, neither by men's words nor by scriptures. O, without fail,"

saith this soul, "in these folks Benjamin is not born, for Rachel liveth yet and she must die in the birth of Benjamin. For till Rachel be dead Benjamin may not be born and brought forth. It seemeth well that these folks that thus seek him by hills and dales and valleys, hold that God is subject to his sacraments and to his works. And they that are thus burdened say little and have heaviness of heart," saith this soul, "until they have their usages. But those have a good time and profitable who seek him neither by more nor less, nor on plains,* nor on mountains, but have him in all places, by union of the gift of will."

"O right well born!" saith Reason, "where seek ye him?"

"I find him over all," saith this soul, "he is one Deity, one only God in three Persons. This is God over all and there," saith this soul, "I find him."

"O sweet Lady of us," saith Reason, "tell us what ye be that speak thus?"

"I am," saith this soul, "this that I am; of the grace of God that am I only, and none other thing than that which God is, in me. And God is also this same [thing], that he is in me. For best is best beloved and is what [he] is. Then am *I* not, if I am only that which is; and none is but God; and for

* MS. "causils."

this I find nothing but God, wherever that I look, for none is but he, sooth to say."

This soul liveth not in Truth, that is the Deity, but Truth liveth in her, who hath all sayings in her fulfilled.

"This is sooth," saith Love, "for all others than these make answer through want of simplicity, but only these naked [souls] forget and have naught to answer."

CHAPTER VI

HOW THIS SOUL DOETH NO MORE WORK FOR GOD, NOR FOR HERSELF, NOR FOR HER EVEN-CHRISTIAN, AND HOW THIS IS MEANT

"THIS soul," saith Love, "doeth no more work for God nor for herself, nor for her even-Christian, even as it is said before in this book. But God, who can all things do, doth it, if he will, and if he will not, she recketh no more of the one than of the other; all is one to her. And this, the beams of divine knowing work in this soul, which draw her out of herself, without her [help], into a divine peace débonnair, felt by a gladsome swimming love of the most High, the jealous one, who giveth her, in all places, masterful freedom."

"Jealous," saith this soul, "so seemeth it well by his works, who hath robbed me

of all myself and hath put me into divine plesaunce* without me, and this union of fulfilled peace joineth and conjoineth me by the sovereign highness of the creation of the other equal member† of that union, who is divine. God is divine; so have I a being that is divine."

"When this soul," saith Love, "is thus drawn out of herself, *without* herself, by God, for him, in him, in this divine work, she cannot never work works of charity of human body;‡ nor can any who attains to this work."

"O understand holily," saith this soul, "the sweet words of Love, for these words be hard to understand for them that desire the meaning of the gloss."

"This is sooth," saith Love, "for work of creatures may not be compared to divine work made of God in creatures, of his bounty, for creature."

* A place for taking pleasure, hence garden, orchard.

† MS. "pared."

‡ Planned by merely human foresight.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE MISCHIEF THAT LUCIFER AND THEY THAT ACCORDED TO HIM CAME TO, BY REASON OF THEIR EVIL WILL

"O God," saith this soul, "how far is the country of the Perished and the country of the Marred from the country of freeness and of fulfilled peace, there where the Settled dwell!"

"That is sooth," saith Love, "and I shall say one word soothly," saith this soul, "against 'Will,' in which the perished and the marred dwell, that lead life of perfection. In heaven when the divine Trinity made the angels of the courtesy of his divine noblesse, some were evil, on account of their perverse election in agreeing to the evil will of Lucifer, who desired to have, by his nature, that which he might not have but by divine grace. And anon, as they willed this, of their forfeited will, they lost the Being of bounty. Now they be in hell without being, and shall be, without recovering the mercy of seeing God. And thus their will, which they had chosen, made them lose this high vision by giving their will to that which they could not attain. Now, behold, to what head they are come."

"Alas, alas," saith Truth, "why love we will, since such loss is made by will?"

"I shall tell thee," saith Love, "why a soul hath will; because it liveth yet in spirit. She sitteth in that life, therefore she hath will."

CHAPTER VIII

WHY LOVE HATH CALLED THESE SOULS IN THIS BOOK BY THE NAME OF "SOUL"; AND TO WHOM THE NAME OF SOULS PROPERLY PERTAINETH; AND TO WHOM THE NAME OF SPIRIT; AND OF THE SURMOUNTED LIFE AND WHO BE PERFECTED IN IT; AND WHAT IS THE PROPER NAME OF THIS SOUL

"Ah God," saith Reason, "Lady Love, tell me why ye have so often named 'soul,' this chosen, beloved of yours, from the beginning of this book unto this time, since ye say that the marred persons have will, because they live yet in life of spirit? And ye have so oftentimes named this noble creature by so little a name as is 'soul,' which is a less name than the name of 'spirit,'" saith Reason; "this marvelleth me!"

"Now wit it well," saith Love, "it is well asked, for in the understanding lieth all the meaning, and therefore hearken now, Reason," saith Love. "All those that live

in life of grace, in fulfilling the commandments, and so live as to be satisfied in that, these have name of 'soul' soothly, and not name of 'spirit,' but name of 'soul' for the life of grace that they stand in. For all the orders of angels have not one same name—if any would name their greatest name—and yet be they all angels. But the first angels have not the name of seraphins, but of angels, and the seraphins have both the one name and the other; understand without saying* what this means! Even so, I tell you, they who keep the commandments and be in that feeling, they have the name of 'soul,' and not of 'spirit.' Their right name is 'soul,' for these folks be full far from the life of spirit. And then is a soul all spiritual when the body and the will is all mortified. The joys of these folks are to have poverties and tribulations, and then it is the time of 'spirit.' And yet in all this time is not the spirit perfectly dead while the wills [still] have their powers by inward feelings.† Nor unto this time is the spirit perfectly dead until it have lost the feeling of his love, and the will is dead that gave her life. And in this death and naked-

* *i.e.*, without further explanation.

† So long as the powers and feelings of the soul are active, the "death of the spirit" is not fully accomplished.

ness be the wills perfectly fulfilled by sufficiency of the divine pleasure. And in this death is born the perfect life, that is then made all free in gloriousness."

"O for God Almightful," saith Truth, "Lady divine Love, shew me one perfect in this Being."

"Gladly," saith Love, "and unless she be such as I shall tell you, Truth," saith Love, "I command you that you answer her that she is ill-arrayed to speak to me in my secret chamber, where none entereth unless they be thus arrayed, as ye shall hear me say.

"Howsoever great she be, she is nothing, who loveth or desireth of me," saith Love, "whether to lose me or to win me, except it be only for my pleasure; for otherwise she is *with* herself, and not *with* me [at all]. But the Espoused of me may not be *with* herself, for though she had done as much sin as all the creatures of the world have done, and has as many gifts of grace as all those of paradise have, and that all this good and all this evil were shown before all this people, this lady should have neither shame nor worship in her thereof; nor will to justify herself.* And if she had," saith Love, "she would be *for* herself and *with* herself, and not *for* me nor *with* me at all. Whatever joy or sorrow they of my paradise have, though men see their

* MS. "answer."

sins or though they receive of me gifts of glory, they have no will to make answer or show for none of these two.

"Ah, without fail, no! they leave it to the Master and are disposed* to show it or to hide it, all at his will. And right so do the souls of which we speak, that be vessels of this election, to whom God showeth and giveth his noble gifts."

"Now, Reason," saith Love, "you ask of us, why we have this soul so little a name named, as is 'Soul.' Reason!" saith Love, "for the rudeness of thee, have I so oftentimes named her by her surname, for most [men] understand a thing by its surname, therefore it is to us now helpful, and yet shall be. But her right name is perfectly noble. She hight† 'pure heavenly spirit of peace,' for she sitteth in the deepness of the valley; there she seeth the highness of the mountain, and, then, in a state of faith,‡ she gazeth upon the mountain of highness, that it may not there downfall. There hath the wise brought her to unite [her with] his treasure, that is, the gifts of the divine generation, and this unity giveth her the peace and the food, holy and marvellous, in the glorious country, there where the lovers of God dwell. There dangers may no more appear, but glorious

* MS. "aworth." † *i.e.*, is named.
‡ MS. "put in credence."

life is had. This is the continual food," saith Love, " of my chosen spouse. This is Mary of peace, for alway she hath the peace of peace, for her Beloved appeaseth her. Therefore is she Mary. Martha is much encumbered; most wise is she not: for her encumbering troubleth her; she is far from the life of peace. For wit it for sooth, that they whom encumbrances trouble, be full far from this life that we have spoken of."

CHAPTER IX

OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, AND WHY HE DID IT BUT BEFORE THREE OF HIS DISCIPLES; AND WHY IT WAS DONE IN THE MOUNTAIN, AND WHY HE BADE THEM NOT SHOW IT TILL HIS RESURRECTION

" Now, for love," saith Understanding of divine light, " tell me, among you, who have somewhat to answer, what ye understand by this."

" And we shall tell you," say the souls of-wit-of-nature, " what we understand by this. We understand," say they, " that when Jesu Christ transfigured himself on the Mount of Tabor, he had with him but three of his disciples, and he forbade them that they should not speak of what they had seen, till he were arisen."

"This is well said," saith the free soul, to them of-wit-of-nature, "for by that which thus [ye] answer, ye have given me the staff that I shall overcome you with."

"Now I ask you," saith this soul, "why God did this?"

"He did it for us," saith the soul that to this answereth, "and since he teacheth us this, why then do we it not?"

"Ah, cheap, cheap," saith the free soul, "how beastly* be your understandings; ye take the chaff and leave the grain. And I tell you that when Jesus Christ transfigured him before three of his disciples, he did it for this, that ye should wit well, that few folks see the brightness of his transfiguration, and that he showeth it not but to his special lovers. And for this had he three, that yet it may be had, when God giveth it to his creatures by fervour of burning charity. Now ye wit why there were but three. And now I shall tell you why it was done in the mountain. For this, that none may not see the divine secret things, as long as he is [engrossed] in temporal things, that are less than God is. Now I shall tell you why God forbade them that they should not speak of that they had seen, till he were arisen. And this is, that ye should have no vainglory, for unto that time none ought to speak. And

* *Bête*, stupid.

thus much I certify you," saith this soul, "without doubt, who hath anything to answer, he hath something to show; else he hath naught to answer."

CHAPTER X

OF MARY MAGDALEN AND ST PETER AND ST JOHN, AND HOW GOD WORKETH YET IN SOULS AS HE DID IN THEM, THAT WELL DISPOSE THEM THERETO

"Oh, for God, behold the sinful repentant Magdalen, what shame or glory had she, that God said to her, that she had chosen the better part and the most sure, and that her Beloved said it should never be taken from her. [What shame had she] of this that her sins be known before all the people, by such witnesses as be the Evangelists? For God threw out of her seven fiends. She hath no shame before anyone but him against whom she had sinned, for she was so upraised and drawn, that she had naught in her other than what was of him. And what shame or glory hath St Peter for this, that God raised the dead by his work, though he had denied him three times? And what shame hath John the Evangelist, or what glory of this, that God showed him his privities? And he made the true Apocalypse [concerning

God], after that he was banished, who before had been at the taking, where Jesus Christ was taken. I hold," saith this soul, "that they to whom God did all this, had of it neither shame nor worship, nor desire to answer that this befell them by reason of what God did by them or for them—nor for other people, if this was their judgement.

"These be examples enough to understanders, to understand the remnant thereof, what this means; and for none other folks is this book written, but for them that understand it.

"I have said," saith this soul, "that for this that God did to them, they had neither shame nor worship, nor will of themselves to answer for any; this ye see well."

"Ah, without fail," saith Truth, "they had no occasion for it, for they were unencumbered of themselves."

"Oh," saith this soul, "since it is so that God did them this, is he not yet the same, hath he made an end with *them* of the gifts of his bounty?"*

"Oh, without fail, no," saith Courtesy. "His divine bounty may not suffer him [to do so]. It ariseth from no other thing† but that [the soul] was not yet there,‡ as

* Cf. 1 Cor. ii 7 *seq.*

† MS. "ne haleth not at." *Il ne tient à?*

‡ MS. "that" = in that state.

compared to the great gifts that he hath to give, and the same that never was given nor said of mouth, nor of heart thought, [may be had] if anyone desired this, and could dispose himself thereto."

CHAPTER XI

HOW THEY THAT WILL COME TO PEACE AND FREEDOM MUST EVER BE READY AND ABLE TO RECEIVE THE SENDING OF GRACE; AND WHAT IT IS TO THEM IF THEY REFUSE IT

" Oh, understand it by love, I pray you, how love hath much to give, and he maketh none end of it. He maketh in a moment of two things, one. But one thing it pleaseth me to say," saith this soul, " not for them that be settled, they have no need, for it does not concern them; but for them that are not, that yet shall be, they must trouble, for it is for them to take heed that they be upon their guard or waiting, if so be that love sendeth them anything of the same that he hath ordained for them, that they refuse it not, for nothing that may fall.

" At what time that it be, let them not ever refuse what love sendeth, for to do the message of the will of love, by letters ensealed

of his signet. Right so as do the angels of the third hierarchy; for this wit well, and I do them well inform, all those to whom love sendeth his message, that if they refuse them at any point there where the virtues would have them, by the inward working of virtues that should have lordship over the body, and [if] they refuse them in this point, they shall never make their peace with the Sovereign that the message sendeth, but that they shall be taken and troubled in knowing, and encumbered of themselves for default of trust, for love saith that in great need men may know their friend.

" Now answer this; unless he help him then, when shall he help him ? tell me, for love, when shall he help him, unless he help him when he hath most need ? And though I think thereon," saith Love, " what marvel is it ? It behoveth me to keep the peace of my divine righteousness and yield to every [man] that which is his. Not," saith Love, " everything that is."

DIVISION IX

CHAPTER I

A GREAT REBUKE THAT LOVE GIVETH TO THEM THAT REFUSE THE SENDING OF GOD, AND HOW THEY BE THEREFORE ENCUMBERED OF THEMSELVES ALL THEIR LIFETIME, AND HOW THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN UNENCUMBERED, AND BY WHAT MEANS AND FOR HOW LITTLE

"NOW understand, auditors of this book," saith Love, "the gloss of this book, for the thing is as much worth as it is appreciated. And all that men have need for, is needful, and no more. And when I desired [it]," saith Love, "and when it pleaseth me, and was necessary to you, I hold need [to be] this, that I desired it—ye refused me by as many messages as I sent you. But none knew it," saith Love, "but I alone. I sent you the Thrones for to answer you and to summon you, and the Cherubin to enlumine you and the Seraphin for to embrace or kiss* you. By all these messengers I sent

* MS. "beclippe."

to you," saith Love, "that made you wit my will of the Beings where I would have had you, and ye alway refused it. And when I saw that," saith Love, "I left you in your waywardness to your [own] knowledge. But if ye had heard me," saith Love, "ye had been wholly another, by your own record. But ye should well wit, and all ye in life encumbered by your own spirit's self, that never shall you be without some encumbering, and all for this," saith Love, "that ye would not obey my messengers and Virtues when I would it. I sent by many messengers to make you free both body and spirit. And for this," saith Love, "you would not when I sent to you by the sensitive Virtues and by mine angels. Therefore, I show you I may not by right give you the freedom that I have, for Right may not do it. And if you had," saith Love, "obeyed when I called you by the wills of Virtues that I sent you, you had had by rights the freedom that I have. Ah, soul!" saith Love, "how you are encumbered by your self!"

"Yea, soothly," saith this soul, "my body is in feebleness and my soul in dread, and often I have heaviness," saith she, "will I or nill I of these two natures, that the far-off freedom I may not have."

"Ah, soul, alas!" saith Love, "what evil ye have for little gain! and all for this that

you obeyed not the teachings of perfection, in which I urged you to disencumber yourself in the flower of your youth. And always you would not yet move yourself, nor nothing would you do, but alway refused my messenger* that I made you wit, by the noble messengers that ye have heard; and such folk," saith Love, "be encumbered of themselves unto their death day.

"Oh, without fail," saith Love, "and if they had willed, they had been delivered of that in which they are in right great servitude, at little profit, and they shall [continue to] be so as compared to the other. And if they had heard me, they had been delivered for right little; for so little," saith Love, "as [merely] to give themselves [up] there where I would have had them, [even] as I showed them, by the Virtues whose office this is. I say," saith Love, "they had been all free of soul and body, if they had done my counsel by the Virtues that said my will concerning what was necessary for them before I delighted myself in them, with all my freedom. And because they did it not, they all abide in this [state] that ye have heard 'with' themselves. Thus think the free naughted [souls] and arrayed with delights, that see by themselves, the servitude of the others; for the very sun shineth in the

* MS "sondis."

light of them, so they see the motes within the sunbeam, by the brightness of the sun and of the beam. And when this sun is in the soul and this beam and this brightness, the body hath no more feebleness, nor the soul dread, for the very Sun of Righteousness, when he did his miracles on earth, never healed soul without the body; but he healed both body and soul; and right so he doeth yet, but he doeth it to none that hath no faith in the same."

Now see how worthy, and strong and right free is she, and of all things disencumbered, whom Faith and Love govern; but none may come to this unless Faith hallow him.

CHAPTER II

OF CERTAIN MEANS WHEREBY THEY THAT BE MARRED AND IN LIFE OF SPIRIT MAY COME OVER TO THE BEING THAT IS NEXT THE BEING OF THIS SOUL WHICH HATH ATTAINED THE HIGHEST BEING; AND IN WHAT CASE THE SOUL IS IN THE TIME OF THAT BEING

"I HAVE said," saith Love, "that they whom I have summoned by their own inwardness to obey the perfection of virtues, who ought to have done so, that they dwell unto the time of death encumbered of themselves,

though they travail every day with themselves to fulfil the perfection of the apostles, by study of reason and of goodwill, they shall never be unencumbered of themselves, neither of body nor of soul. No soothly," saith Love, "since the running fancies* of their inward arguments giveth it them not. It may not to them come, for all that ever is done of them, it is all encumbrances to them. This wit all they who undertake works of themselves without the fervour of the willing of their inwardness."

"For thus I say it," saith this free soul, "to all them that live in study of life of perfection, that they be on their guard and keep themselves that they refuse not the askings of the fervent desires of the will of the spirit, as clearly as they feel them, whereby they may have the better [life] after those lives that be called 'life marred' and 'life of spirit'; that they may come to this life that never worketh nor asketh: for the settled can [have] no better than this.

"I say," saith Love, "that they be on their guard, that is to say, that those which stand in the state of the twain first lives of perfection, that they follow duly and diligently all the good stirrings and fervours that the soul willeth and desireth, as much

* MS. "rennyng conceits."

as they may, for it is needful for them to do so if they will have the better [life] afterwards; for the former lives be but maiden servants that array the house against the coming of the great Being, to lodge* the state that is the freedom of not-willing, in which the soul is of all points freed. To this come they that give all, for all who give all, have all and not else. And thus much," saith this free soul, "I will say to them that be marred, that they keep the peace, and fulfil perfectly the will and the fervour of cutting desire of the work of their spirit, as I have said, in holding their wits so close,† that they have nothing by work of deliberation beyond the will of the spirit, so that they may reach to these rightful works, that is most nigh the being that we have spoken of. Where the eldest born daughter of the high King is set, there faileth her nothing of gentleness. And this lady," saith Love, "hath this being attained, the which is most highest and most worthy and most noble. And I shall tell you how," said Love, "there is not so much as the quantity of a point in her that is not fulfilled by me, so that nothing created may dwell in her thought. And she hath piety

* MS. "harborowe."

† MS. short; in holding back their conscious reflections upon their state.

in her, but not of appearance,* and nevertheless," saith Love, " piety and courtesy be not from this soul departed, when there is time of need."

" That is right," saith this soul, " no more is it from Jesus Christ by whom I have life. When that his precious soul was glorified, as soon as she was knit to the body of the manhood and to nature divine in the Person of the Son, there dwelled in him pity and courtesy. And he who is courteous loveth not but that thing that he ought to love. He loveth not the spiritual things, who loveth temporalities. Nor he loveth never divinely who loveth bodily. They that love the Deity feel little of the humanity —during the time of that usage. Never was a soul knit, nor oned, nor divinely fulfilled, that feeleth bodily things. Of what should the inwardness of these souls feel? for God does not move himself, nor does she move herself."

M. Now understand by nobleness of understanding the gloss of these words. The meaning of these words that the soul saith, that her inwardness feeleth not, she moveth not herself, it is meant for the time of ravishing in union. There be three manners of unions that devout

* MS. " of semblance."

souls feel, in sundry dispositions, but I mean of the highest, that is best; and that is the union where, through ravishing of love, the soul is knit and oned to God, so that God and the soul is one spirit. For St Paul saith: it is not two spirits, God and the soul, that is thus oned to him, but it is all one spirit in time of this union.* Of what, then, should her inwardness feel in the time of this union, or [how] should she herself move herself? Oh, she may not do it, for she is all molten in God for the time. Ah, this blessed oneness lasteth but a little while in any creature that is here in deadly life, for the corruption of nature† may not suffer it. But it may oft be had by the goodness of God, who is the worker of this work in souls where he vouchsafes [it]. To him be offered all glory and praisings to everlasting laud.

Lo ye that study this book, thus ye must within yourselves gloss such dark words. And if ye cannot come soon to the understanding thereof, offer it meekly up to God, and by the custom of oft reading thereon, ye shall come thereto. A few words more I say in this book, to bring you into the way, notwithstanding that I

* Cf. 1 Cor. vi 17.

† MS. "Sensuality of mankind."

was purposed before to have glossed no more. God grant us alway to do his pleasing and bring us to him when it is his will. *N.*

CHAPTER III

HOW THESE SOULS BE NEVER FEEBLE NOR ENCUMBERED OF THEMSELVES

"Ah God," saith Reason, "what these souls be! certainly through baptism be they never openly feeble,"* saith Reason, "nor encumbered of themselves."

"Oh," saith this soul, "no soothly no, love destroyeth not, but she keepeth and nourisheth and feedeth all those that trust in her. Sun and darkness and seas be fulfilled. I sing," saith this soul, "[at] one time, song, [at] other time, unsong, and all for them that yet shall be free; so that they may here, in this book, learn some point of freedom and what thing behoveth them before they come thereto."

* MS. "certis at baptism apertly be they never feeble."

CHAPTER IV

HOW THIS SOUL HATH PERCEIVED THE COAST OF THE COUNTRY WHERE SHE OUGHT TO BE

"THIS soul hath perceived by divine light the coasts of the country where she ought to be. She passeth the sea to gather the shoots* of the high cedar; for none taketh nor attaineth to this cedar unless they pass the high sea, in naughting their wills unto the waves. Understand ye lovers what this is."

CHAPTER V

OF THE DEBTS OF THIS SOUL, AND HOW THEY BE PAID, AND BY WHOM, AND WHO IS HIS NEXT NEIGHBOUR

"I HAVE said," saith Love, "that this soul is fallen of me into naught, and less than naught without number. For right as God is not to be comprehended as to his might, so is this soul in infinite debt for but one hour in time, without more, that she had will, against him. So that she oweth him, without default, the debt of that which his will willeth; and so many times as she hath willed to rob

* MS. "ympes."

God of his will, she is in debt as much as his will is worth."

"Ah, visible and insufferable debt," saith this soul, "who shall pay this debt? Ah, Lord, certainly you; for your plenteous goodness,* that is swimming and flowing full of courtesy, may not suffer but that I be quit by you, God of love, for you have my debts paid in a moment!"

"The right sweet Far Night† hath supplied‡ the last penny of my debt. And I say to him, 'As much care have ye for me as I for you, though I gave you as much as you have, for such is the largesse of your divine nature.' 'So willeth he,' so saith this gentle Far Night, that is my counsel.§ These two debts, the one and the other, be henceforward all one, for this is the counsel of my next neighbour, and thereto I consent."

"O clean, pure Lady Soul," saith Reason, "who is your next neighbour?"

"His Exalting Ravishing that uptaketh me

* MS. "bounty," and so throughout. The sense is sometimes goodness, sometimes a "favour."

† The Far Night is here impersonated and stands for Counsel in a mock pleading at law. The meaning seems to be that the soul's experience of the "dark night" has freed her from any kind of positive guilt of sin, and also from the debt of "omissions."

‡ MS. "hath brought."

§ MS. "avant parlour."

and throweth me in the very midst* of divine love, in which," saith this soul, "I am drowned. Then is it right that he sustain me of himself, for I am laid in him; I must stint," saith this soul, "for I may not tell it.

"No soothly," saith Love, "no more than the sun may stay† or dwell, no more may this soul say of this life as compared to that which—truth to say—truly is."

CHAPTER VI

HOW THIS SOUL IS A SPRING OF DIVINE LOVE, AND HOW SHE SEETH THAT SHE IS NAUGHT, AND HOW THIS NAUGHT GIVETH HER ALL

"AH, Lady Soul," saith Abashings, "ye be a continual spring of divine love, of the which spring of divine love waxeth the well of divine knowing, and the streams of divine laud."

"And of this spring of divine love, the well of divine knowing and of the streams of divine lauding, I remain," saith this confirmed soul, "perfectly in his divine will."

"Now hath this soul," saith Love, "her right name of Naught, in which she moveth, for she seeth that she is naught, and that she

* MS. "midst of middle."

† MS. "shut," evidently O.F. *ferme*.

hath not of aught, neither of her nor of her even-Christian, nor of God himself. For she is so little, that she may not herself find, and all thing wrought is so far from her, that she may not feel it, and God is so great that she may nothing of him comprehend. And because of this naught, she is fallen into certainty of naught-knowing and into certainty of naught-availing, and into certainty of naught-willing. And this naught, which we speak of," saith Love, "giveth her the all, and otherwise might she not have it."

CHAPTER VII

OF TWO THINGS THAT THIS SOUL DOETH NOT, WHICH MAKETH HER TO HAVE PEACE; AND HOW SHE IS NO MORE ENCUMBERED OF THINGS THAT SHE DOETH WITHOUT HER, THAN IF SHE DID IT NOT; AND WHO BE PERFECTLY FREE

"THIS soul," saith Love, "is imprisoned and fettered and holden in a country of entire peace, for she is there in full sufficiency. There she shippeth and saileth and floateth and swimmeth, and is filled of divine peace without the moving of her inwardness and without the work of her outward doing. For these twain aforesaid unmake this peace, if it may so befall; but not of this soul, for

she is in sovereignty. Nothing may grieve her, nor nothing encumber. If she do anything by her outward wits, that is always *without* her; and if God do his work in her, [then] it is, of himself in her, *without* herself, *for* him. No more is this soul encumbered of anything that she doth, than is her angel of the keeping of her. For no more be the angels encumbered to keep us than if they kept us not; neither is this soul [encumbered] any more by what she doth, than if she did it not. For she hath naught of herself, she hath all given freely without any 'for-why?' in him that is all. For she is lady beyond the thought of her youth, and Sun that shineth, heateth and nourisheth life of being, discovereth her from her former being. This soul," saith Love, "hath not held* doubt nor trust."

"Eh, what then, for God?" saith Reason.

"Certain confidence," saith Love, "and true agreement† to will only [and wholly] the divine ordering; thus it is that she is perfectly free."

* Not "held," etc.; not given herself up to feelings of either doubt or confidence.

† MS. "accordance"; Latin *affinitatem*.

CHAPTER VIII

OF FOUR COSTS THAT THIS SOUL IS MADE FREE OF; HOW SHE HATH LOST HER NAME BY UNION OF LOVE AND IS TURNED ABOUT TO LOVE, AND HOW YET THERE IS MORE HIGH THAN THIS; HOW NONE MAY UNDERSTAND THIS BOOK BUT THEY THAT LOVE HATH MADE IT FOR

Of four costs* behoveth a bondman to have before he might be free and called a gentleman; and right thus it is in the understanding of this spiritual doing.

The first cost that this soul which is free hath, is this, that she hath no grudging of conscience, though she work not the work of virtues. Ah, for God! understand it, ye that hear this, if ye may! How might Love have this usage concerning all the works of virtues, since work ceaseth when love hath this usage?

The second cost is, that she hath nothing of will, no more than have the dead in graves, but only the divine will of God. This soul recketh not nor hath heart of righteousness,

* Cost = treasure, something costly. The bondman must have the four precious "costs" before he is fit to be freed.

nor of mercy.* She planteth all in the sole will of him that moveth her in him; this is the second cost by which the soul is made free.

The third cost is, that she holdeth this; that even as God could no more will aught but goodness, so she believeth that she could not will other than his divine will. Love hath arrayed her so with himself, that it maketh her thus to hold of herself. For he, of his bounty, hath turned her into this favour by goodness. Also of his love hath he, unto this love, by love, turned her. And of his will, hath her in his will, by divine will, purely turned. She is of him, in him, for him, thus led; and this holdeth she, otherwise she should not be free of all costs.

Understand the gloss, auditors of this book! Where the stream or the flood lieth that drowneth the thought. This is then when she is in being; in the which God maketh her to have [a] being; there hath she given her will, so that she may not will but the will of him that hath led her of himself, for him, unto his bounty. And she that is thus free of all costs, liveth in sovereignty, and there she loseth her name and is drowned, and in this drowning left of him, in him, for him, in himself. So loseth she her name,

* *i.e.*, she is not set on apportioning justice or mercy.

right as doth a water that cometh out of the sea,* that is called Oise or Meuse, and when it entereth into the sea it loseth its name and its courses by which it ran in many countries in doing its work; and ceaseth in the sea. There it resteth itself and hath lost its labour; and right so soothly it is of this soul. In order to gloss the meaning ye have of this and for this, enough ensamples; how this soul cometh to the sea and doth her labour and how she stinteth in the sea, there hath she lost her name and her labour. She hath no name but the name of him, in whom she is perfectly moved, that is, in Love. That is the spouse of her joy† which hath drawn the thought wholly into him. She is, then, this that is. And that soundeth marvellous to her; then is she marvellous and Love is her pleasure, the which Love delighteth her.

Now is this soul without name, save the name of the very Union where Love moveth her. Right as the Water that we have spoken of, that hath the name of the sea—for it *is* sea as soon as it is entered into the sea—it is not drawn to anything contrary by any nature of the ground.‡ Also, no matter

* *i.e.*, out of a lake. This is a well-known illustration in the Dionysian School.

† MS. "the dispens of her play"; Lat., *hic eius est ludi sponsus*.

‡ A reference to some thirteenth-century law of gravitation?

maketh of it nor of the sea aught but one thing, not twain, but one; and right so it is of her of whom we speak. For Love hath drawn all her nature into him, that Love and this soul are all one thing; not twain, for that were discord, but only one, and therefore this is a good "accord." "It is right," saith Love, "that this soul that thus is free of these four costs, that she ascend afterwards to sovereignty."

"Ah, Love," saith Reason, "is there yet anything more high?"

"Yea," saith Love, "this that is her next neighbour. For when she is thus free of these four costs and noble* by all the freedoms that of her be descended—for no churl is accepted† in this marriage—this soul that is thus noble, falleth then," saith Love, "into dismay that is called naught, thinking of the far-off results of what is near;‡ that is her most nigh neighbour. And then liveth this soul," saith Love, "not in the former life of grace, nor in the life of spirit, but gloriously and divinely; for God hath hallowed her in this point by himself, and nothing contrary to goodness may befall her."

* MS. "gentle"; O.F. *gentil* = noble.

† MS. "taken."

‡ An obscure passage. MS. "thinking of the fartake of nigh. . . ."

Understand holily, all as it is; so may God give you alway being without removing! This I say to the persons for whom Love hath made this book, to him for whom I have written it. But among you that have not been such, nor be, nor shall be, ye trouble yourselves in vain, if ye will understand it. He who is not this, tasteth not this. [For it is to be] in God without being, [for] in God's self *is* being. Understand the gloss! He that is lame of limbs may not well go, nor the feeble may not swim.

"Ah, without fail," saith Reason, "this is well said; [he who is] cumbered, encumbereth [others]."

CHAPTER IX

OF THE RUDENESS OF THEM THAT BE GOVERNED BY REASON, AND HOW THIS SOUL WILL NO MORE FOLLOW THEIR COUNSEL

THUS then speaketh this soul, abashed by naught-thinking, by this far night of night; who in peace delighteth herself. "Soothly," saith she, "they that be governed by reason, the rudeness nor the cumberings of them no man may say. By their teachings it appeareth; it is the work of an ass and not of a man, if any man would hear them. But God hath kept me well," saith this soul, "from such

lore of Reason's disciples; they shall not hold me in their counsel, nor their doctrine will I no more hear; I have been long therein holden, sometime I thought it was good, it is not now my best; of that, they know nothing; for a little wit may not put a price [upon a] thing of worthy value, nor understand anything unless reason be master thereof; and if they did understand it any time, it is not often. And therefore, I say," saith this soul, "that their rudeness I will no more hear: let them tell me nothing, for I can no more suffer it. I have neither ways nor means;* to God this work pertaineth, who doth in me his works: I owe him no work since himself worketh. If I [put in] mine, I should unmake his, and for this cause the work and teaching of the disciples of Reason would harm me. If I believed them, in such dread I should abandon this work, by their counsel. They follow [after] to attain a thing that is impossible, but I excuse them for their intention.

* MS. "I have not of what, nor for what": Fr. *Je n'ai pas de quoi ni pourquoi.*

CHAPTER X

HOW THIS SOUL IS FREE AND CONSUMED BY MORTALITY, AND BRENT IN THE BURNING FIRE OF CHARITY; AND HOW THIS SOUL SEEKETH NO MORE GOD BY OUTWARD WORKS. OF THE MARVEL THAT REASON HATH OF THIS, AND OF THE PEACE OF MARY AND THE TROUBLE OF MARTHA

"THIS soul," saith Love, "is free and right free, surmounted free of tree, crop and root, and of all its branches. Her lot hath this of freedom, ended of every cost; there hath she her full purity. She answereth to none, nor oweth she to do so, unless he be of her lineage, this is to say, unless it be according to her disposition within herself. This soul findeth none that calleth her, nor none that she answereth to, nor her enemy hath no more answers from her."

"This is right," saith this soul, "since I draw God to me, it behoveth that he support me. God his bounty, he may not lose."

"This soul," saith Love, "is consumed by mortality, and brent in the burning fire of charity, and the powder of her not cast nor thrown, but given into the high sea by naught-willing of will. She is right gentle and noble in prosperities, and highly noble

in adversities, and excellent noble in all places that she is in."

"She who is such," saith this soul, "she seeketh no more God by penances, nor by no sacraments of Holy Church, nor by thoughts nor by words, nor by works, nor by holy creatures, nor by creatures of above,* nor by righteousness, nor by mercy, nor by glory, nor by divine knowing, nor by divine love, nor by divine praise and laud."

"Ah, Lord God," saith Reason, "what saith this creature at first? This is all deadly!† What shall my disciples say? I know not what to say nor what to answer, to excuse this!"

"Oh, what marvel is it," saith this soul, "these folks of thy nursing be on foot without going, and have hands without work, and mouths without speech, and eyes without sight, and ears without hearing, and reason without reason, and body without life, and heart without understanding, as long as they have this being, and therefore it is marvel upon marvel [to them]."

"Yea, soothly," saith Love, "this is to them right marvellous marvels; for they be full far from the country where these others have these usages of high worthiness. But they that be such as we speak of, that be in

* *i.e.*, supernal beings.
† MS. "slaying."

the country in which God liveth himself, they have not marvel thereof."

"No, forsooth," saith this soul that is free, "for it were a point of villeinage,* and I shall tell you how. If a king give to one of his servants that truly hath served him a great gift, by which the servant were rich all the days of his life after, and never [had] to do service more, why should a wise man marvel at this, or why should he blame the king for his gift, and the freedom of the gift?"

"Nay," saith Courtesy, "a wise man marvelleth not of thing that is done, that pertaineth to be done, but alloweth it and praiseth it and loveth it; and if he marvel, he showeth in that, that he doeth that which he ought not to do. But the servile hearts that be not wise, that know not for default of wit what honour and courtesy is, nor what the gifts be of a noble lord, they have thereof great wonder, and that is no marvel!"

"They have cause† in themselves," saith Truth, "as ye have heard before."

"Ah, for God," saith Nobility-of-unity of the freed soul, "why should anyone marvel that hath any wit in him? If I say great things or mean these things, or though I have by all, of all, in all, my full sufficiency, my

* MS. "vilayn"—*i.e.*, a matter of the law of villeins.

† Fr. *de quoi* = reason.

Beloved is great, who great gifts giveth and maketh it all at his will. He is fulfilled abundantly of all goodness of himself. And I am full enlumined and abundantly fulfilled of abundance of delights, by holding his divine bounty in me, without seeking him by the paps of his consolations,* as this book deviseth," saith this soul. "He calleth me to peace, without fail."

"It is right," saith pure Courtesy. "It fitteth the Beloved since he is worthy, that he of his bounty call his lover to peace."

Martha is troubled, peace hath Mary. Praised is Martha, but more Mary. Mary hath but one intention in her, and that only one intent maketh her to have peace, and Martha in many intentions, have ofttimes unrest. And therefore a free soul may only have one intention. She heareth oft, this soul, things that she heareth not, and is full ofttimes where this soul is not, and feeleth ofttimes that which she feeleth not. "I hold," saith she, "for this, mine [own which] I shall not let go; it is in my will, befall what may; for he is with me, then it were a default if I [let myself be] dismayed."

* MS. "assommementis," Lat. *consolationes*.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE DEATH OF REASON BY THE STRONG SPEECH OF THIS SOUL; AND HOW LOVE ASKETH IN THE STEAD OF REASON "WHO IS MOTHER TO REASON AND TO OTHER VIRTUES?" AND HOW IT IS MEEKNESS AND WHICH MEEKNESS IT IS

"THIS soul," saith Love, "is lady of virtues, daughter of deity, sister of wisdom, and the spouse of love."

"Soothly," saith this soul, "but this seemeth to Reason a marvellous language, and that is no wonder, for it shall not be long until he shall not be; but I was," saith this soul, "and am, and shall be without failing; for love hath neither beginning, nor comprehending, nor end; and I am [nothing] but love, how might I then have end? It may not be."

"Ah, God," saith Reason, "how dare any say this! I dare not hear it. I fall, Lady Soul; soothly my heart faileth me to hear you. I have no life."

"Alas, alas! why had this death not been long ere this time," saith this soul, "for until this [death had been] I might not freely hold mine heritage. And this that is mine is that [whereby] I fell* you with love and

* *i.e.*, kill, MS. "fall."

wound you to death. Now is Reason dead," saith this soul.

"Then shall I say," saith Love, "this which Reason should say if she were alive in you and which she should ask of you, our Beloved," saith Love to this soul, which is Love and none other thing than Love.

These sayings, then, that Love saith to this creature, of his divine bounty, have thrown Reason and the works of virtues under his feet, and to death brought [them], without recovering. "Now I say that [which] Reason should say. She should ask," saith Love, "who is mother of her, and of the other virtues that be of her germain."*

"And these, be they mothers of none?" saith this soul.

"Yes," saith Love, "all the virtues be mothers."

"And of whom?" saith this soul.

"Of peace and of holiness," saith Love.

"Then be all the virtues that be germain to Reason mothers of holiness?" saith this soul.

"Sooth," saith Love, "of that holiness that Reason understandeth, but of none other."

"And who is then mother of virtues?" saith this soul.

"Meekness," saith Love, "but not that

* Germain = akin = First cousin.

meekness that is meekness by works of virtue. She is germain sister of Reason. I say 'sister,' because it is a greater thing to be mother than child; this ye see well; and nearer is kin than stranger."

"Oh," saith this soul that speaketh in the person of Reason, "then is that meekness that is mother of these virtues but a daughter. Who is this, and of whence cometh she, that is mother of so great a lineage as be the virtues, and tutor* to feelings, when virtues be mothers? Who is ancestor† to this feeling? Can none tell whence this line cometh?"

"No," saith Love, "they that know cannot put it into speech."

"This is sooth," saith this soul, "but I shall add here to this what I shall say. This meekness that is tutor and mother is daughter of divine majesty. She cometh of the divine deity, where the mother is ancestor of these branches,‡ whose root is of such great fruitfulness.§ We still ourselves, speech overwhelmeth it. She hath given the stock and the fruit of her root and branches. Therefore near lieth the peace of the far night, which disencumbers her of

* MS. "taye," Lat. MS. *tutor*.
† MS. "aile."
‡ *i.e.*, by Mother Right.
§ MS. "fructifiances."

work; speech and thought it maketh all shadow; for her far night disencumbereth her so that nothing shadoweth her."

CHAPTER XII

HOW THIS SOUL IS FREE OF ALL, AND HOW SHE HATH SO PLANTED HER WILL IN THE TRINITY, THAT SHE MAY NOT SIN UNLESS SHE UNPLANT IT

"THIS soul," saith Love, "is quit of services, for she liveth in freedom. Whoso serveth, he is not free; whoso feeleth he is not dead, whoso desireth he would [have], whoso would [have], he beggeth. And whoso beggeth, he hath a lack* of divine sufficiency. But they that be truly alway upholden and taken of love and naughted by love, and all overspread of love, they have no heart but on love, even though they should suffer evermore torments and endure them, though the torments were as great as God is great in bounty. Never loved the soul finely that doubteth that this be not true.

"This soul hath given all by freedom of nobility of the work of the Trinity. In the same Trinity this soul planteth so deeply her will, that she may not sin, unless she unplant it. For she hath nothing wherewith

* MS. "of falliance."

to sin, for without will may no creature sin. Now ye dare not reck of sin if she leave her will there where she hath planted it, that is, in him who hath given it her freely, of his bounty; thence will she not take it, but there she planteth it all wholly, freely, without any 'for-why?' And not for her [sake], but for him, for two things. One is because it is good, and the second is, because he willeth it. Up to this time hath she no peace fully, steadfastly, nor peaceably, till she be of her will purely departed. These that such be resemble always a drunken [man], for the drunken man, he is no more afeared for anything that is coming to him, whatever adventure may befall him, than if it came not to him. And if he be [afeared], he is not all fully drunk.

"And also if this soul have anything wherewith to will, it is ill planted. She may yet fall if she be assailed with adversities or with prosperities. Then is she not whole, for she is not naked. No, since she hath wherewith to will or to unwill, or to withhold her will."

CHAPTER XIII

WHAT IT BEHOVETH THEM TO DO THAT BE IN LIFE OF SPIRIT, TO COME TO LORDSHIP AND SOVEREIGNTY

"AND yet I will thus much say," saith Love to all those that be in life of spirit, "that if it be asked of them, let them do the asking of the desire of their inwardness, in following the works of perfection by the study of reason, willing or not. For if they will, by this they may be and shall come to the being that we have spoken of, and shall yet be lords of themselves and of heaven and earth."

"And how, Lord?" saith Reason that to this cannot answer.

"By this way," saith this soul that is free; "if she holdeth all without care or without heart* and all giveth without heart, and all taketh without heart, and all hath without heart; and if her heart feel it, this is she not."†

"I have said," saith Love, "that they do the asking of their inwardness, if it be asked, for otherwise I command it them not; and if they leave all the will of their outwardness

* *i.e.*, without setting her heart on what she does, gives, suffers, etc.

† See note *infra*, p. 301.

for the inward life of spirit, they shall yet come to all lordship and sovereignty."

"Oh," saith the spirit that this same seeketh in life marred,* "tell me how?"

"Forsooth," saith this soul that standeth in freedom, "none can see it but he only that *is* this thing in creatures, of his bounty for creature. But this I shall tell you," saith this free soul, "what behoveth a creature ere he come thereto. It behoveth him perfectly to do the contrary of his will in appeasing the virtues up to the throat, and hold this point without falling [away, namely, that] the spirit have alway lordship without contrariosity."

"Ah God," saith Truth, "how sick is the body of the heart, where such a spirit is."

"Soothly I say," saith this free soul, "that it behoveth to have such inward working in life marred, this is to say, in life of spirit, so that it destroy† the humours of all sickness, in a swift moment. Such physician hath Fervour-of-spirit."‡

* Latin MS. *perditiva.*

† MS. "waste."

‡ The contradiction is again only superficial. In this life of spirit—for these souls so called, there must still be active mortification of all that affects the will; the spirit must overcome the will as well as the flesh.

Truth protests with the observation that such a spirit will sorely wear out the body. The only

"This is sooth," saith Love, "whoso that doubteth in this, if he had assayed,* he should wit the sooth."

CHAPTER XIV

HOW THEY THAT BE IN LIFE OF SPIRIT MUST ALWAY DO THE CONTRARY OF THEIR PLEASAUNCE IF THEY WILL HAVE PEACE, AND HOW THEY THAT BE FREE MUST DO ALL THAT PLEASETH THEM OR ELSE THEY SHALL LOSE PEACE. WHAT THING IT IS THAT GIVETH THIS SOUL AND IS MOST NOBLE BEING THAT MAY BE HAD IN THIS LIFE

"Now I shall tell you," saith Love, "of the soul in freeness, and also of them of the life which we have spoken of, that we call life of spirit, it may have no peace unless the body do alway the contrary of its will. This is to be understood, that these folks do the contrary of that which delighteth them. For otherwise, else, they should

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answer is that many wearinesses and humours of sickness are often put to flight by a fresh sharp act of additional physical mortification. This is the prescription of Fervour-of-Spirit, and Love appeals to the experience of those who have tested it by trial.

* Assay = try.

fall into loss of this life, unless they do alway the contrary of their pleasure. And they that be free have to do all the contrary, for right as them behoveth in life of spirit to do all the contrary of their will, unless they will lose peace, [so] behoveth it in life that is free, to do all that pleaseth them, unless they will lose peace.* If they be come into the state of freedom, that is, if they be fallen† from virtues into Love, and from Love into Naught, they do nothing except it please them; and if they do [otherwise], they rob themselves of peace, freedom, noblesse. For until then is not the soul wholly refined, until she do that which pleaseth her and that she be grudging of doing the contrary of her pleasaunces. That is right," saith Love, " for her will is ours, she hath passed the Red Sea, and her enemies therein left. Her pleasing *is* our will, by the purity of unity of the will of the Deity, wherein we have enclosed her. Her will is ours, for she is moved from grace into perfection; from works of Virtues and from

* This freedom, the highest state of the soul, implies a perfect union of will with God, so that the desires are transformed, and only that which pleases God is desirable. This has often been established in the case of the saints. Obviously no deductions in favour of self-indulgence are to be drawn from this passage by those who have not attained that state.

† Fallen, here and following = moved, changed.

Virtues into Love; and from Love into Naught, and from Naught into clarifyings* of God, who seeth with eyes of his majesty; who in this point hath enlightened her by himself, and [she] is so left in him, that she neither seeth him nor herself. If she saw herself in this divine bounty she should be *for* herself;† but he seeth this bounty in her who wist this of her before she was. When he gave her of his bounty then he made her lady. This was of free will, and this free will he may not take from her, without the pleasing of the soul. Now he hath it without any 'for-why?' right in such a way as he had it before she was lady thereover. Now naught is but he; no one [is] loved but he; for none *is* but he. This calleth her alone, this maketh her a lone soul, and the all, sole, alone[ness] of his own being giveth her that point, that is the most noble being that any creature may have, in this life of perfection. And under this there be five [beings] in which men must live according to the perfection of the call‡ of every [man], before a soul may have this, which is the sixth, which is most profitable and best and the most noble and the most gentle of all

* *i.e.*, illumination.

† "For herself," cf. note on "with herself," p. 18 Here = attached to her own interests.

‡ MS. "asking," God's asking—*i.e.*, vocation.

the other five. And in paradise is the seventh, that is made perfect without any lack. And thus doeth God of his bounty in his creatures, his divine works. The Holy Ghost inspireth where he will and is marvellous in his creatures."

CHAPTER XV

WHAT THING IT IS THAT HATH GIVEN THIS SOUL FREEDOM IN ENDURING OF THINGS

"Ah, Lord," saith this soul, "ye have so much suffered for us and can so much work in us, by you, of you, for us, that these other works have taken their end in us, but that is right little refined.* Now work in us, by you, of you, for us, without us, thus Lord as it pleaseth you. For as for me henceforward, I make no fors, I disencumber myself of you, both of myself and of mine even-Christian. Thus I shall tell you how I relinquish you and me and mine even-Christian, everyone, in witting of your divine wisdom, in the streams of your divine might, in the governance of your divine bounty, for your sole will. And this sole thing of love, led, cleared, and clarified by divine majesty, hath of all things given me enduring freedom, without breaking," saith

* MS. "tempred."

the soul that is thus called, " for else it were no gift unless it were without failing. Now understand, if ye have this gift !"

CHAPTER XVI

OF THE PEACE OF THIS DIVINE LIFE, AND HOW MARY MAGDALEN HAD IT WHEN SHE WAS IN THE DESERT. AND HOW OUR LADY HAD IT ALWAYS, AND WHAT THE LANGUAGE OF THIS LIFE IS

" Now I say to them that serve," saith this soul, " to bring them into life of freedom, I owe it not. His love is not served in this, nor is this naught*—it may not be. And when such [a soul] is naught, then liveth God himself in this creature without breaking the peace of his creature. The peace of this life of divine life, it suffereth not to be thought of, nor spoken, nor written. And this love is without work of body, and without work of heart, and without work of the spirit, for divine work hath fulfilled the law. Reason praiseth the Magdalen for she sought Jesu Christ, but love stilleth him. This forget not, for she failed when she sought divine life, but when she was in [the] desert, love

* The sense seems to be that these " other souls " have not attained to the " naughted life "—and so his love may not be best served by them—" that may not be."

took her and annihilated* or naughted her, and in her wrought. Then had she love in her of him without herself; she lived then of divine life, which made her have glorious life. And then she drew God to her without seeking him. She had no need to seek when love had taken her. But when she took love, she sought him by desire of will, in feeling of her spirit. That was human and not clean, pure, divine, for she was then marred and not Mary.† She wist not when she sought him, that God was all, by all, in all, she had not then sought him. I have found none that alway did this, but the Virgin Mary. Never had she will according to the senses, nor work of spirit, but [she had] the will of the Deity in work divine. This was and is, and shall be her divine beholding, her divine love, her divine peace, and her divine lauding; altogether her labours and all her rest, to will only the divine will, and therefore she had glorious life enclosed within the soul of her mortal‡ body without any intermediary.§ The language of this divine life is close silence of the divine love; she hath wist this afar off, and of long known, that there is nothing more divine than alway to will the divine will."

* MS. "aneantized" = made her nothing.

† Is this a play on words "marred" and "martha'ed"? ‡ MS. "deadly." § MS. *entredeus*.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW AND BY WHAT MEANS THEY THAT STAND IN DESIRE MAY COME TO REST OF SPIRIT; AND OF THREE THINGS OF THE DIVINE LIFE AND OF THE INNOCENCE THAT IS GOTTEN BY THIS LIFE

"O YE that stand in desires and be not yet come to the rest of spirit, work and travail busily, and naught yourselves, for none may rest him in highful rest that is alway restful-able, unless he be afore awearied, I am thereof sikker.* Therefore let the virtues have that that is theirs of the cutting wills, of the fervours of affection of your spirit, till they have acquit you of the debt that ye owe to Jesu Christ. Himself saith in the Gospel: *Whoever believeth in me, he shall do such works as I do, and yet more greater shall he do.*† Where lieth the gloss of these words, I ask you? In this, not till then when one hath paid to Jesu Christ all that he oweth him may he have the peace of the divine country where life dwelleth. God give you hastily from your natural perfection to come to this, where that is pleasure and harmony‡ of the powers of the soul, and of all thing

* *i.e.*, sure. † John xiv 12.
‡ MS. "accordance of the mights."

sufficiency. Thus it behoveth to be, for there be the three [kinds] of divine life, that we call the glorious life, and the being which love giveth us of his bounty formed, that leadeth in soul the first day that it attaineth to earth, that is innocence, which Adam lost in Paradise terrestre by disobedience: the pain dwelt with him and Jesu Christ took it. Then it is good, right, and reason, that true innocence dwell with us. The very innocents are never right nor never wrong, they feel all naked, that have not anything to answer. All [men] answer and all fail to agree,* by the sin of Adam, but the innocents have not whereof to answer."

CHAPTER XVIII

OF THE MOST HIGH BEING THAT THE NAKED, NAUGHTED, OR CLARIFIED SOULS BE IN

THE country of virtues that the marred work in is full far from the country of forgetting and all-naked, naughted, or clarified souls, that be in the most high being. There the soul is abandoned in God for him, in him, of himself. Then is he not sought nor praised nor adored† by these creatures,

* MS. "unaccorden."

† He is not praised by any direct and conscious effort of the soul, but by indirect modes of love and praise, of which the soul is largely unconscious.

but only by that which they may not know nor love nor adore. This is the fulfilling of all their love and the last denial of their way. The last, it accordeth with the first, for it discordeth not. This is right, since she hath run that she rest herself in that place; for she may do all that she will, by the true bounty of his divine being. And she may do all that she will without making a return for his gifts, who, of his proper being, hath set her thus. Why should it not? for this gift is also all that he is in himself, who giveth it to this soul, and this gift moveth her purely into himself. This is Love's self. And Love may do all that she will. So may not Dread, nor Discretion, nor Reason,—wit it forsooth—nothing gainsayeth Love. This soul seeketh not the fulness* of her understanding, but God seeth it in her without breaking her.† Thus have the aforesaid virtues naught to answer.

Then saith she to him thus:

* MS. "the playne." Fr. *plein?*

† Without having to destroy the shell that it may appear.

DIVISION X

CHAPTER I

OF THREE THINGS WHEREBY IT MAY BE KNOWN THAT THE SOUL IS NOT COME TO PEACE, BUT IS BEGGING; AND WHAT PARADISE IS

"O GOD that all [things] canst, O Lord that all thing knowest, O my Beloved that availeth for all, do whatever ye will. Sweet Father, I cannot! Sweet Master, I know not! Sweet Beloved, I am naught. And therefore I will naught. And if any say thus 'Ah, for God, let us [suffer] nothing of ours nor of none other than of him henceforward to be within us, which it behoveth God with his bounty to put out,' this is a begging creature, that by her emptiness seeketh God in creatures. Soothly, she findeth the deed that she willeth and that she herself doeth.* But truly, she that findeth him, suffereth him to do his will and his divine works in her without her own

* She finds what she seeks, and by her own activity procures the spiritual consolation she desires, and does the work herself; but it is not *God* to whom she attains.

working. But one that seeketh and findeth not dwelleth enfamined of that which she asketh. And when she seeth this, thus saith to herself, that she will seek him. And so she doth in that she asketh him afresh by her wit, by understanding, of the most high and pure thought, and there she seeketh; this is a begging creature also. And if she think that we shall write more explicitly than other creatures have written, it is begging, this that she hears, for she would that her even-Christian found God in themselves by writings and by words. This is to say and to be understood, that she would that her even-Christian were made perfect in the manner that she deviseth, specially all those to whom she hath good will.* Thus to do and thus to say, is begging; for in doing this, and in saying this, and in dwelling thus, and in willing this, she remaineth a beggar—wit this forsooth—and encumbered of herself. And all because she beggeth of them for

* The author exhausts the snares into which the soul may fall by "desires." He warns against spiritual curiosity seeking even in the "explicit writing" of his own book for knowledge which is to come from God alone. This often is disguised as zeal for our neighbour's spiritual welfare, and so constitutes a further error by involving them in the love of creatures. Further, the soul enlists sympathy and borders upon pride, when she thus "enlightens" others—"she beggeth of them for whom she does it."

whom she doeth it." "Certainly," saith Love; "but this doth not the high soul of peace that liveth of glory, even of glory's self in paradise, all alone; for paradise is not other thing than God himself."

CHAPTER II

HOW IT IS [TO BE] UNDERSTOOD THAT THE THIEF WAS IN PARADISE THAT DAY THAT HE DIED AND OUR LORD WENT NOT INTO HEAVEN BEFORE HIS ASCENSION

WHY was the thief in paradise as soon as the soul was departed from this body, and Jesu Christ, God's Son, ascended not into heaven before the Ascension, and the thief was in paradise on that same day? But will ye wit how this may be; for it had to be, for God had promised it him. This means, he saw God who is paradise; for paradise is not [any] other thing than to see God. And this doeth she in sooth, at all times when she is unencumbered of herself. [She is] not glorified, for the body is tied to this creature, but divinely and gloriously, for the inwardness is perfectly delivered of all creatures. So liveth she without intermediary* by the

* MS. "mean."

life of glory, and is in paradise without being.* Gloss these words if ye will understand it or ye shall misunderstand it, for it hath some likeness to the opposite† [for those] who understand not the fulness of the gloss; and likeness is not truth, but Truth is truth and nothing else.

* The soul disencumbered of her selfhood sees God and lives by the power of the life of glory without intermediary means. To be in that state is to be in paradise, though she is not there in a physical state; or possibly "she is in paradise without [consciousness] of any particular state (being)."

† MS. "semblance of the contrary."

DIVISION XI

CHAPTER I

HOW THEY THAT SIT ALL IN FREEDOM DO REST THEMSELVES IN PURE NAUGHT WITHOUT THOUGHT

AH, what had he in thought, who this book made?* This same, that the righteous God it seemeth that he cannot come again. This is to understand, that he would that creatures begged as he doth in other creatures.† Certainly, do it they must, before they come to perfect freedom of all points.

"I am deficient‡ and naught may take,"

* This phrase and the following seem to be the work of the Translator. There is no indication how far he has paraphrased and interpolated the original. Possibly largely throughout; at least the difference noticeable in the second part of the book from Division VI may be due to the predominance of his remarks.

† Seems to mean that God desires that creatures should dwell in the same silent passivity towards him and others as he himself does in his hidden life within us. They should "beg" as much as he does—*i.e.*, not at all.

‡ MS. "all short."

saith this soul that wrote this book. "I am as foolish in the time that I make it—except that love maketh it for me at my request—as he should be that would shut the sea in the compass of his eye and bear the world upon the point of a rush, and light the sun with a shadow! I am more a fool than he that this would do, when I put so precious* a thing in speech, that may not be said, nor written. I encumber myself with writing these words, but thus I take my recourse to come to my strength and succour and to my last crowning crown, of the being of which we have spoken of; which sitteth all in freedom, that is, when a soul resteth in pure naught without thought; for till then she may not be free."

CHAPTER II

WHAT THING THEY DO THAT BE IN BEING ABOVE THEIR THOUGHTS

"Ah God," saith Reason, "what do they that be in being, above their thoughts?"

"They marvel themselves,"† saith Love, "of him that is in the mount of their mountain, and they abash themselves of the same, that is, of the deepness of their valley, by a

* MS. "price."

† Wonder, used actively.

naught-thinking, which is shut and ensealed in the most pure and secret closet of this excellent soul. For none may open, nor unseal, nor shut when it is opened—this precious shutting and this noble opening—unless the gentle Far Night, of right far, and of right nigh, shut it and open it; who beareth the key,* for none other beareth it, nor may bear it."†

* Apoc. iii 7.

† The personification of the "far night" here is consistent with the style of these later portions, and indicates merely that the "dark night" is the means by which the soul attains to God in a state beyond conscious thought.

DIVISION XII

THE ONLY CHAPTER

HOW THEY THAT BE OF ALL THINGS IN SOVEREIGNTY KNOW AND FEEL THE LIFE THAT THIS BOOK SPEAKETH OF, AND NONE BUT THEY

AMONG you ladies to whom God hath given this life of his divine bounty abundantly, without any withholding —not only this life without more, that we speak of, but that other with this, which never man spake of—ye shall know in this book your estate. And them that be not nor never were, nor shall be, feel not this being. They know it not nor they may not, nor they shall not, they be not of the lineage that we speak of. Wit it forsooth, no ! for the angels of the first order be not seraphins, nor may not be, for God gave them not the being of seraphins. But they that be in God, by whom they shall become,* know this thing, and feel it by strength of the lineage of which they are and shall be more stronger than they be.

* *i.e.*, by whom they shall *be* more fully.

And these folks, that we speak of, that be, and shall be, wit it well, know altogether that they be of the lineage. Then these folks are they who, by their state, are in sovereignty over all things, for their spirit is the most high and noble of the orders of angels wrought and ordained. Now these folks have, of all the orders, the most high mention for the spirit, and the most noble complexion* by nature, when they are sanguine or choleric; that is, not melancholic nor phlegmatic; for of the gifts of fortune, these be the best to have; yet they hold all to be best, according to their will and their necessity, for themselves and for their even-Christian, without anxiety of conscience.

* *i.e.*, best disposition

DIVISION XIII

CHAPTER I

WHAT GREAT DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN SOME ANGELS AND OTHERS, AND ALSO OF THE SOULS THAT THIS BOOK SPEAKETH OF, COMPARED WITH OTHERS THAT BE NOT SUCH; AND HOW THEY THINK THEMSELVES TO BE BEST

NOW hear among you, the great perfection of the naughted souls, these which we have spoken of. "It is said," saith Love, "and I say it myself, that there is also as great difference among angels of some orders compared with others, as there is of men and asses. This is easy to trow,* for any who should open the divine wisdom. Let none ask me why, unless ye will err, but believe it, for this is truth. And right as it is of some angels compared with others, as ye have heard say, right so it is by grace of the naughted souls that we speak of, as compared with all those that be not. He is right well born that is of that lineage, those be folks royal, their hearts are so

* Trow = believe.

excellent noble, and of such great worthiness and wisdom that they may not do thing of little value, nor begin thing without attaining the crown.

"These folks be the least that may be, as in their own sight, witness of God himself, who saith that the least shall be the most in the kingdom of heaven.* It ought to be believed; they believe it verily that be such. But who believeth a thing which he is not? Soothly none, for the truth of believing is in the being of him who believeth. And so he that thus believeth is the same that this is [*i.e.*, is "least"]."

CHAPTER II

OF THREE WORDS WHEREIN THE PERFECTION OF THIS CLEAR LIFE IS FULFILLED

SHE, this soul is no more troubled concerning herself or others, or God himself; weening that she is not; so that she is not [indeed]. Understand the gloss. This weening that she is not, is in her will, which is not hers for herself.

In these three words is fulfilled all the perfection of this clear life. Therefore I say clear, seeing that she surpasseth the blind naughting; the blind naughted sus-

* Matt. xviii 4.

taineth her feet, [but] the clearness is the most noble and the most gentle [state]. She wotteth not of anything that is, for she is not; but God wot in her, of him, for her, of himself.

CHAPTER III

HOW THIS SOUL SEEKETH NO MORE GOD; AND WHAT THING IT IS THAT TAKETH FROM HER LOVE OF HERSELF. AND OF THE BOOK OF LIFE AND THE OPENING THEREOF

THIS lady seeketh no more of God, there is no more to do [about it]. He faileth her in naught that she should seek him; why then should she seek him? He is with her, she hath him, and if he faileth her, I know not why she should seek, since he lets himself be sought.*

"Oh," saith this soul, "why should I do anything that my Beloved doeth not, he wanteth nothing. Why then should I want anything? In this I [should] love myself if I lacked anything since he lacks nothing. He lacks naught; then, I lack naught, and this point taketh from me the love of myself, and giveth me him without mean and without withstanding. I have said this,"

* *i.e.*, if he wills not to be found, why should she seek him?

saith this soul, "that he wants naught. Why then should I want? He seeketh naught, why then should I seek? He thinketh not, why then should I think? I shall not do it, Reason," saith this [soul] naughted and clarified by default of love of herself. "My works that be done, these have ye done. And so shall ye do if ever I know you, but I reck not of you. I have done all."

"Right when?" saith Reason.

"Right then," saith she, "when love hath opened me his book, for his book is of such condition, that what time that love openeth the book, the soul wot all and hath all, all works of perfection it hath in her fulfilled, at the opening thereof. And this opening hath made me have so clear sight," saith this soul, "that it hath made me yield that which is his, and to take that which is mine. This namely is alway of himself, and I am not. Then it is very right that I have not myself. And the light of the opening of this book hath made me find mine [own] and to dwell in that. I have not so much of being that may make me be of him. And thus hath Right yielded me mine [own] by rights, and showed me a 'naught'—that I am not. And it would be right, that I should have myself no more; this Right is written within the book of life.

"Thus it is [concerning] this book, and

myself," saith this soul, who was of God and of creatures. "When he made them, he willed it of his divine bounty, and all was done in the same moment of his divine might, and all ordained of his divine wisdom."

CHAPTER IV

OF THREE BEHOLDINGS THAT ONE SHOULD HAVE TO COME TO PEACE. AND HOW WE SHOULD NOT SET LITTLE BY A DEFAULT DONE AGAINST GOD

"Now for God," saith this soul, "behold what he hath done and what he doth, and what he shall do. Then shall ye have peace, stillness and rest of peace in peace; and of such peace [as is] raised above corruption, if ye dwell in the risen peace. Ah God, what great words these be; whoso should understand the truth of the gloss?"

"Ah God," saith Understanding of the soul naughted, "am I not enough in prison of corruption, where I am obliged to be; will I or nil I; though I allow me not to the cart of correction?*

"Oh, what a great pity it is when wickedness hath the victory over goodness. And

* "I allow me not," do not willingly submit to the punishment of the cart of correction—*i.e.*, to be dragged through the streets in the public criminal's cart, or beaten at the cart's tail.

right so it is of body and of spirit. The spirit is made of God, the body is formed of God. Now these two natures are joined and knit together by nature and by justice, in corruption. In the fount of baptism these two natures are put together without corruption, by the divine justice that hath made these two natures. And when a fault overcometh this complexion and this [new] creation, which is made of the divine goodness, this seemeth not a little thing however little that fault may be. And then, this fault troubleth us unto bitterness and driveth to a madness* against ourselves. [Though] it is not wilful, it is not a little thing this, since it pleaseth not the divine will, but displeaseth him."†

"Ah God," saith Knowing of Divine Light, "who is he that dare call this little? He who calleth it little, I hold he was never well illuminated, nor never shall be unless he amend him. For he hath greatly offended in this, that he putteth the displeasing of our Lord in such reckless heed."

* MS. "hortleth to a woodnesse."

† The whole passage is very obscure. The author explains that, since Baptism remedies the corruption of original sin, we naturally feel distressed at any further actual sin, however venial, but this distress should not be allowed to drive us to "a bitter spirit against ourselves." Nevertheless, even a venial sin is not a small matter since it displeases God.

CHAPTER V

HOW IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE RIGHTEOUS MAN FALLETH SEVEN TIMES A DAY

It is much to say of such a servant that serveth his Lord well at all points in all thing, that he knoweth that which might best please the will of his Lord.

"Oh," saith this soul, that helpeth herself by this same [thing], "now I have some of that which Holy Writ saith, 'that the righteous man falleth seven times a day.'* He is well enlightened† who understandeth that this [sin] is not a case for correction,‡ for the word 'correction' is used when men fall into fault by the consenting of their will. And corruption is the fleshliness of the complexion of our bodies; it seemeth else, by this tale, that I have not free will, if I must sin against my will seven times a day. It is not so with God's grace," saith this soul, "for it must be that God is not God, if virtues be taken from me maugre me.§ For no more than God may sin, who cannot will it, no more may I sin if my will will it

* Prov. xxiv 16.
† MS. "yclered."
‡ A legal term: *in causa correctionis*.
§ *i.e.*, against my will. Fr. *malgré*.

not, such freedom hath my sum* given of his pure bounty, by love."

M. The "summe" of this soul is the knowing that she hath of the goodness of God, and this goodness of God, which is the Holy Ghost, worketh in her and gave her free will. *N.*

"And if I willed it, why should he not suffer it, else should his power take from me freedom. But his goodness may not suffer his power to unfree me of free will, in nowise. This is [how] no power taketh from me my will, if my will will not assent thereto. Now hath his goodness by pure bounty given me free will by bounty; he hath not given me a greater thing of all that he hath made for me. He presenteth this to me which he hath made of his courtesy, and if he take it again, he doth me no wrong. But my free will, freely hath given it me; that, he may not take from me, unless it please my will.

"The support† of the love of his bounty hath given me this nobility by love; then may not the strength of evil take from me the freedom of my will, if I will not; thus ye may see how freely he hath given me my will.

* MS. "the summe of me" = my sum and summa, he who is the sum of all, to me.

† MS. "uppressure."

" I have said here before," saith this soul, " that he hath given me no more but my free will. How may one understand by this saying that he hath not given me all ? Since he hath given me nothing but free will, it breaketh the other things. But so hath he given me, that he may nothing withhold from me, for love asketh that; else it were not love of [the] Beloved, unless it were of such a [kind]. For in this, that he hath given me free will, of his pure bounty, he hath given me all—if my will will it; he holdeth nothing from me, I am thereof sikker."

" Ah how, for God ?" saith Dread.

" In this," saith this soul, " that I give him freely my will, without any withholding, purely for his bounty and because of his sole will, just as he gave it me of his gift, for a profit to me, of his divine bounty.

" Now I have said," saith this soul, " that God would not be God, if my will were taken from me against my will. This is sooth, that there is nothing more certain than this, that God is not God if my will be taken from me, except my will will it. This is full far from that which is said, that the righteous falleth seven times a day, into a case for correction."

" But I shall tell you," saith Truth, " what it means this that Holy Church saith, that the

righteous man falleth seven times a day. This is to understand when the will of the righteous hath given the inclination* without any [actual transgression]† to fulfil the fault. For by the inclination of the sin of Adam the body is frail, and enclining to faults, for it enclineth oft to tend towards a lesser thing than is the goodness of God. And this Holy Writ calleth 'falling,' for so it is. But the righteous keepeth him from consenting to the fault, which might increase by such inclination, so that his falling, in which the righteous falleth by inclination to-fore said, is more virtue to him than vice, because of the will that dwelleth free by rejecting the fault, as it is said before; now may ye understand how the righteous falleth from high to low. And how that falling, though it be low, is more virtue than vice.

"Now understand, since it is so, that the righteous falleth seven times a day, then must it be that he riseth seven times, or he may not of the falling seven times arise! He is blessed that often falleth for he is such a one that cometh soothly from thence whither none goeth unless he have the name of righteous. But more righteous is he that alway abideth where stableness is. But this may not alway be had, as long as the

* MS. "entente."
† MS. "other breaking."

soul hath company of the body in this world. But this falling maketh not peace to be less, by troubling the conscience, [so] that the soul liveth not in peace by the gifts that be given her from above.* So may not the virtues be against virtues, but above them. If this may not be then were God subject to his virtues, and the virtues should be against the soul; but they have being from our Lord, for the profit of the [soul]."

CHAPTER VI

HOW THIS SOUL WILL SAY THE SUM OF HER DEMANDS, AND HOW SHE KNOWETH NOT HER OWN ASKINGS. AND OF THE TWO CAUSES THAT MAKETH HER TO SAY THAT SHE WILL SAY THE SUM OF HER DEMANDS

"Now," saith she, "I shall tell the sum of my questions and these my questions shall be by the Sum fulfilled. Nevertheless," saith the soul, "lest any should say that I know the questions that I ask, [it is not so], for all the nine orders of angels, nor all the saints that be in these orders, know it not; then witteth it well the tenth estate, that is in the glory without being, and none of these nine orders."

* *i.e.*, the peace does not come from the possession of the virtues or from the gifts of God, but from God himself.

"When none of the nine orders wot it not, what wit ye, Lady Soul?" saith Reason.

"So doth God [set]," saith Love, "by divine nature, the drawings of his love in her, who formeth her questions in her without [her] witting. And her questions be out of all creature's knowledge, where creatures may have no knowing thereof."

"What marvel is it," saith this soul, "if they wit it not; why should any wit it, but he of whom I am, that in me is the same [one], and he is the secret of love that is between [us] made, where my love is enclosed, without me? This drawing, his bounty maketh for me, who giveth me alway new love; but of this that he doeth in me, of him, for me; nor of that which I ask without my asking, by the ondrawing of his pure nature, I may not wit," saith his soul, "nor [may] all those of glory [wit], but he only that is one in Deity and triple in Persons."

"But," saith Love, "that which he hath said, that she shall tell the sum of her questions, is this, that if any have this which she shall say, in sooth, he hath that which none may tell the whole of, nor think [it], except he that alway worketh it in her, of his work, without her work, of his divine goodness. This is to say, without the work of this soul, and therefore saith she, that she shall tell the sum of her demands, that

a soul may not suffer herself to be deceived for nothing that may fall, but that she keep this, and this is, that she see these twain [things].

" The first thing is that she see this alway, if she see aught: what she was when God made her out of naught—[into] aught—and that she be sikker in certainty that she is none other than that, as far as she herself is concerned, nor never shall be; without this [doth] she never [arrive] at the divine bounty.

" The second thing is: that she see what she hath done with the free will that God hath given her; then shall she see that she hath taken from God himself his will, in one only moment of consenting to sin. This is to be understood, that God wot all, and whoso consenteth to do sin, he taketh from God his will; this is sooth, for he doeth that which God willeth not, and is against his divine bounty."

CHAPTER VII

WHAT A SOUL OWETH TO GOD FOR ONE DEFAULT, AND WHERETO IT IS BROUGHT BY A DEFAULT

" Now," saith this soul, " behold the debt of one only misdoing; for in sooth, she oweth of twain who hath twice fallen into sin."

" Two times," saith the Light of the soul, " soothly, no more than men may number how often I have drawn my breath, no more may my sins be numbered. How ofttimes I have taken from God his will! for as oftentimes as I have had will against his will, I have lost will and withdrawn and withholden it from himself, who hath given it me freely, of his bounty. For [concerning] one thing well done; if God desired a greater good which a creature might do, if it were asked [of him] and he do it not, he sinneth. Behold what ye owe then for one of your faults, so shall ye see that ye owe as much to God for one of your faults, as his will is worth, which ye have taken from him, by doing of your will. But now, behold, that ye may better understand what thing is the will of God. It is in the whole Trinity, which is one Will; then is the will of God in Trinity robbed by one default!

" Ah Love, we shall make partie for the stupid* understanders. Take we this soul that is best, that could now be richest and would be quit of her debt that she oweth to God, and pay him neither more nor less, but this that she oweth him for one fault alone. There should nothing abide with her, for she hath naught nor never had, as of herself, anything, but [it] hath had a will

* MS. " bestials "—*i.e.*, Fr. *bête*, stupid.

to do a fault. So there dwelleth with her nothing to sustain her, but she must be reduced from strength to naught before she be quit of this fault only, if the debt of justice should be paid. Oh, what might then be said, if a man would say the sooth of all the other sins, of which there is no number, when he might say this of one fault alone, if he wanted justice and said that it must be, for it is safe* by right and none other thing but right."

"Now soul," saith this soul to herself, "if ye have all this that this writing deviseth, say we not more, but all is his by debt, ere I be quit of this one debt alone. What owe I then for all mine other defaults and sins, that none witteth but Truth, who is judge, to whom I owe this debt. And ere I owed anything, naught I was, and naught I had, this ye see well. And God gave me will for to follow this will of his goodness, for to win him himself; and I have robbed him of it in doing of my own† will. Also, I have [together] with my poverty, the great filth of sin and of sins, which none knoweth but Truth alone.

"O God, O God," saith this soul, "what am I now, when I was naught before I owed

* MS. "selven," *sauf?*

† MS. "proper," with sense of own or self-will. Cf. below.

anything; what am I now? When I was nothing, before I owed to my God anything by the work of self-will, and yet should I have nothing ere I were quit of one of my faults, without more, though I had the same that this book speaketh of, where it speaketh of the argument* of which ye have heard! Now I have not in me neither this nor that, nor may I have. And though I had it, ye see well what I should be, when I were quit of one sin. Now have I never aught, nor naught may I will, as of myself; nor none may give me anything wherewith to pay my debts. Ah, Truth," saith this soul, "what am I? Tell me."

"Ye were naught," saith Truth, "before ye had anything forfeited to me, of this which I gave you; now ye be another, for ye be worse than naught," saith Truth, "at all times, when ye have willed other than my will. This is sooth," saith Truth, "for Truth is truth and nothing else."

"I take it of you, Truth," saith this soul. "I know nothing better than this, that if God would take justice for one of my sins without mercy, I should have torment and pain without end, according to his power. But, Lord, though that ye be righteousness, and truth, and judge," saith this soul that hath misdone, "O King full of debonnairety,

* MS. "partie."

Pity and Mercy, that be your sisters germain, sweet and courteous, dwell with you to acquit me of my debts! And in this I appease me," saith this soul. "And whichever of these sisters falleth to me, I reck not, whether it be Righteousness, or Truth, Mercy or Pity. I have no care," saith she, "which lot I fall [into] of these four. All is one to me, without joy and without heaviness, for I cannot see that he neither increaseth nor diminisheth by the justice that he taketh of me; nor by mercy that he doth to me, and so fare I. I have no joy of the one nor misease of the other, since my Beloved in this neither loseth nor winneth. All is one to me concerning him that is one; and this point maketh me one or else I should anon be twain. If my will were set on the one more than the other, whether of mercy or of righteousness, then were I 'with' myself, and so should I be twain. The Son of God is my mirror in this, for God the Father gave his Son our Saviour to be an ensample to us. There is none other way of beholding of this aforesaid gift, but only to look upon* the doing of our Saviour; for the Son bought us with his death by very obedience, to fulfil his Father's will. He had none other beholding in that doing, but the will of God

* MS. "see"—*i.e.*, to watch intently the Lord's action.

his Father solely. And God's Son is our ensample; we ought in this beholding to follow him, for we should will solely in all things the will of God, and so shall we be the sons of God the Father, to follow the ensample of Jesu Christ his Son. Ah God, what a good beholding this is! I have no possession in this doing.* Not that it were possible for me to sin if my will will not; then be we of his will, of which he hath fully set us in full possession. This is, he dwelleth with us without seeking, why seek we him any more? We have him, he is with us. Why take we him not without seeking? Whoso seeketh thing that he hath, doth so for default of knowing; he that so doeth hath not the art which giveth science in creatures."†

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT ART IT IS THAT GIVETH SCIENCE IN CREATURES AND OF THE RAVISHING OF LOVE, AND OF THE PEACE OF NAUGHT WILLING

"WHAT is art that giveth science in creatures?" saith this soul that seeketh.

* MS. "none in possession"=sense of proprietorship.

† *i.e.*, knowledge of the created world.

"It is a far gone mind,"* saith Love, "by which understanding groweth, that giveth knowing to a soul more perfectly of a thing that men say, than of a thing she saith herself, howsoever good the sayings be in all she saith. For why? Those that understand rest, and the speakers labour, and knowing may not suffer labour, for labour is a less good. For this art is human and cometh of nature, [namely], to attain the fullness of its takings, but this other is without more, the sole work of God. And the inward mind is the substance of the soul, and the understanding is the work of the soul, and the knowing is the sum of the soul. This knowing is of the substance of understanding of love in this life, that harboureth in her all the life of goodness, and setteth her in this good seat in a high place, through love.

"And so love leadeth in her, which giveth her this being, and she leadeth in naught and not in love; for a soul is 'with' herself, that leadeth in love. That love maketh a soul see that she taketh the lead in her pride and jollity; for Nature is 'with' this love;

* *i.e.*, either an advanced mind or, I think, a mind that hath gone far off (*i.e.*, into the far night) in which it receives infused knowledge and comes to understand the problems of the created world, especially by a silent listening to the teachings of others, behind which she discerns more than she might herself express.

they have this in being, somewhat to give and to take, and so is the soul dangerous and fierce. In such being it departeth from meditations, for this is the being of contemplation which withholdeth and voideth thoughts; but this soul that leadeth in naught, and love leadeth in her, doth this in herself, without herself. For she hath no more of her that might make her glad or heavy. Fine* thoughts have no more lordship in her. She hath lost the usage of her wits;† not her wits, but the usage of them; for love hath ravished her from the place that she was in by leaving [the stirrings of] her wits, for love hath taken from her the former usages.

"And this is the fulfilling of her pilgrimages. And hastily she taketh the stirrings of her wills, and fasteneth it in him that she loveth. And there she is betaken into the high sea, and so she liveth without her proper will, and sitteth in being above her counsel, for otherwise she should be reproached of the sovereign that putteth her there 'without' herself. For else, she should have war with Love, that is, the Holy Ghost. For [in] reproaches of the Father, and threatenings of the Son, there is nothing [found] of

* MS. "jolly." Fr. *joli*? or perhaps merry.

† *i.e.*, of conscious reflection in the time of prayer.

the oil of peace. That surpasseth all those that lead in will; but these, that lead in full sufficiency, they have full much peace and delights which their love giveth them by union of love; more than these other have, for war is with them that have anxieties. In such war be they often, those who lead in will, how good soever the works be that will doth.

"But the divine bounty hath not to reproach her that hath peace, who leadeth in not-willing, and hath offered the will there where it was before she had will."

"Ah God," saith the soul that is free, "how well is this said; but it behoveth that God do this without me, [even] as he made me without me, of his divine bounty."

CHAPTER IX

OF THIS BOUNTY OF GOD AND THE WORKING THEREOF

"Now am I," saith this soul, "wrought of him without myself, for work passing me and the strong works of virtues, they for me and I for him, till I be in him. And thus I may not rest in him, that is God, unless he set me so without myself, of him, right as he made me without me, by himself. This

is the uncreated goodness* that he hath made created; so leadeth goodness unwrought, the goodness that he hath wrought.

"Now hath Bounty unwrought free will as his property;† and he giveth us also, of his bounty, free will coming out of his might, without any 'for-why?', but for ourselves as a gift of his goodness. Now have we will coming out of his bounty and out of his might, for to be more free, as he hath will of his might and of his proper freedom.‡ And the divine goodness saw that we were in the way of pestilence and perdition by the free will that he had given us. And this will is come out of his goodness and it is given us by his grace. Thus was knit human nature to divine goodness in the person of the Son, for to pay the ransom of our debts that we have misdone by our sinful will. Now may I see by this where I ought to be, namely, that I should resort there where I was, in that point that I was, within the One. And that I be of him so beloved, as he is Who Is; and as naked as I was when

* MS. "bounty unwrought." Bounty used throughout where I write favour, goodness, grace.

† *i.e.*, attribute.

‡ Just as God hath will, so we have will that we may be more free, but it proceeds from his goodness and power; but God's will is an attribute of his power and freedom. This passage marks the author's Augustinian training.

I was that which I am not. And this it behoveth me to be, if I will have my own; otherwise I may not have it. Gloss this if ye will, if ye can; and if ye cannot, ye must leave it. Never shall ye be so deeply naughted if ye have that by which ye cannot behold;* for otherwise I understand it not. If his goodness give you this beholding, I unwill it not, it is that [which] it is.

" This is goodness enduring,† that yieldeth by nature of charity, the outpoured gift of all his bounty, and this bounty enduring engendereth bounty agreeable. From these two cometh the love amiable of the Beloved in souls. And by this love amiable these souls behold alway the Beloved."

* If you possess that " something " which makes you incapable of understanding this. Note that it is the possession of a faculty, not its absence, which makes " them that have, have not."

† MS. " bounty permanable."

CHAPTER X

HOW WE MUST DRAW WITHIN US ALL THE LIFE THAT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF LED AND PREACHED, ACCORDING TO OUR POWER; AND WHERETO WE SHALL COME BY IT

THIS book showeth by thoughts of partie,* by works of perfection, by demands of reason, that it behoveth us to draw unto us all the life that Christ Jesu himself led and preached to us, according to our power; for he said of far, thus: *Whosoever believeth in me, he shall do such works as I do and yet more greater shall he do.*† And this must we do ere we have the victory over ourselves. And if we do this, to our power, we shall come to this, that we shall have it all, by putting *out* of us all thoughts of partie, all works of perfection, and all demands of Reason. And then shall the Deity do in us, for us, without us, his divine works. He is that is. Pure is that which is of him, in love. And therefore see we ourselves, that we have naught of ourselves; see we also this, without knowing of ourselves. This to be in us, is very Being.

* See note *infra*, p. 302.
† John xiv 12.

CHAPTER XI

WHETHER A CREATURE MAY DWELL IN LIFE AND BE ALWAY WITHOUT HER. AND WHEN A SOUL IS WITHOUT HERSELF AND WHEREOF SHE LIVETH WHEN SHE IS WITHOUT HER

I ASK of clarified and enlumined [souls] that lead otherwise than those before [named] do, if any creature of mankind may dwell in life and be alway "*without*" them? If these twain cannot tell it, none shall tell it me, for none knoweth it unless he be of the lineage. Truth speaks for them at our questioning, and love declareth it, that say that then is a soul naughted "without" her, when she hath no feeling of nature, nor no work of inwardness, nor shame, nor worship, nor dread of nothing that may befall, nor none affection hath. The divine goodness is no more entertained by Will, but is in all times without will.* And then is this soul naughted by height outside herself, that is, that God sufficeth her. Then doth she all without her. And though she do all without her, what marvel is it that she is no more "for" her. Then

* All this must be qualified by comparison with other passages.

liveth she of divine substance. There is one substance enduring, one fruition agreeable, one conjunction amiable. The Father is substance enduring. The Son is fruition agreeable. The Holy Ghost is conjunction amiable, and the conjunction amiable is of the substance enduring and of the fruition agreeable, by divine love of unity, which engendereth of [his] goodness, reflecteth his ardour in unity and unity in divine love. This divine love engendereth in a naughted soul, in a soul freed, in a soul clarified, substance enduring, fruition agreeable, conjunction amiable. Of this substance enduring, the memory [is] of the substance of the Father. And of this fruition agreeable, the understanding [is] of the wisdom of the Son. And of this conjunction amiable, the wills [are] of the goodness of the Holy Ghost. This goodness of the Holy Ghost conjoineth her in love of the Father and of the Son. This conjunction putteth a soul in a being, without her being, which is being. This being is the Holy Ghost himself, that is the love of the Father and of the Son. This Love, the Holy Ghost, swimmeth in a soul and is poured out in abundance of delights, of a gift right high that is given of upraised ravishing, by knitting of union of the sovereign Beloved, that giveth himself simply and simple her maketh. And he

giveth himself simply to show that there is none but he whence all things have being.

And this cometh of love in light of divine lauding, and maketh one willing, one love and one work in two natures. One, according to goodness, by conjunction of the strength and stirring of union of love. "This doth my Beloved," saith this soul that is such, "and thus are the spreadings of divine love without any want. Of this divine love the divine will useth in me, for me, and without my beholding." [So] saith this soul in her Beloved, that is full perfect love. So she seeketh nothing, nor anyone, by choice, to help her, but taketh his and hers as honey of Sion's salve.

CHAPTER XII

HOW THIS SOUL JOYETH SOME TIME WITHOUT HER FEELING; AND OF THREE THINGS THAT MAKETH HER TO HAVE JOY; AND OF THE BLINDNESS OF REASON

THIS soul rejoiceth herself sometimes in the supreme part of him, without her feeling, willing nothing of other[s] than of [him who is] her nearest. For she perceiveth in her spirit, and not without witting, what is the way by which he cometh to the gate, where she is oned to his will. And her joy of his

goodness in recalling the bounties of her salvation, it beareth her light into the supreme place, where she is oned to her Spouse, and this pleaseth her in his pleasure. Then is she of that place whence she is. The salvation of her even-Christian is her pleasure, and that is oned to her will. Her joy of his bounty and the recording of the deeds of his bounty, maketh her also to have joy, without feeling of Reason.

Now perceiveth Reason that she hath joy, and goeth and saith to her that she hath sin thereof, that she maketh joy of that for which her even-Christians weep. Reason judgeth after that which she knows. She would alway truly do the work of those things that appertain to her and she is purblind, that she may not so highly see; therefore maketh she to the soul this complaint. Purblind is Reason, ye may well see. For nothing may see the high divine things, but that which ought everlastingly to be. Therefore by right, Reason may not see this, for his being must fail and [come to an] end.

"Eh, who saith it?" saith the high exalted Spirit that is no more under Reason's control. "God hath nowhere to put his goodness," saith she, "unless he put it in me, for one may have no greater 'rascal'* to be made

* *i.e.*, low-born creature to be ennobled. MS. "rascail that is made gentil."

noble by him, nor can he have any [better place] where he may put all. And through this I am the salvation of creatures and the glory of God."

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THIS SOUL IS THE SALVATION OF CREATURES TO THE GLORY OF GOD, AND HOW THIS IS MEANT*

"THIS I shall tell you how and for why and in what? For this, that I am the greatness and the sum of all evils. For as I hold of my proper nature this which is evil, then am I all evils; and he is the greatness of all goodness that holdeth in him of his proper nature all goodness. Now am I all evils and he is all goodness, and to the most poor ought the alms from his equals to be done, or else there is taken from him the thing that should be his of right. And God may do no wrong, for this does not befit him. Then is his bounty mine by the cause of my necessity and for the justice of his pure

* In this and the preceding chapter the French tendency to spin out ideas to their utmost logical conclusion is very marked. Here clearly the expression outruns the mystical intuition on which it is based.

bounty. Now, since I am all evils, and he is all goodness, it behoveth me to have all his goodness before all mine evil be stanched, nor with less may not my poverty be sufficed.* And his goodness may not suffer it since he hath so much of worth, that I should dwell a beggar. And a beggar must I be [according to the measure of my] strength, unless he give me all his goodness, since I am all wickedness. For less than the great fullhead of his all-goodness may not sustain my need, nor fulfil the deepness of my own wickedness. And thus I have in me by his pure bounty, his goodness divine and have had without beginning, and shall have without end.

"For always have I been, in [the] witting of his divine wisdom, of the will of his pure divine bounty, of the work of his divine might; and otherwise this were a fable, if it were not right, thus for me, to use that which I say, [namely], that I am the salvation of all creatures and the glory of God. Also, as Jesu Christ is buyer of the people by his death, and the laud of God the Father, right so am I, because of my wickedness, the salvation of mankind, and the glory of God the Father. For God the Father hath given to his Son all his goodness, and this bounty of God is given to be known to

* MS. "pass."

mankind by the death of Christ Jesu his Son; and this Son is the magnificence of the Father everlastingly and the buyer of mankind.

"Right so, tell I you," saith this soul, "that the Father hath spread and given all his bounty in me. And this goodness is given to mankind to be known by my wickedness. Then am I the laud of God everlastingly and the salvation of mankind, for the salvation of all creatures is none other thing than knowing of the bounty of God. And since all shall have by me the knowing of the goodness of God, and this goodness of God doth me this bounty of his favour, then the goodness of God by me shall be known. This bounty by me* God knew had never been known, neither was my wickedness. And since by my wickedness God is known and also his divine bounty, and since the soul's salvation is no other thing than to know the divine bounty, then am I the cause of the salvation of all creatures, for the goodness of God is known by me.

"And since the bounty by me is known, I am his glory and his laud, for none other thing is his glory nor his laud, but the knowing of his divine bounty. And I am cause of that. For the bounty of his pure nature

* *i.e.*, reflected through me.

is known by the wickedness of my cruel nature. Greater reward* have I not in having his bounty, than that it regards my wickedness. Then may I no more be without bounty, for I may not my wickedness lose. And this point he hath assured me of without doubt by his pure bounty. And solely the nature of my wickedness hath arrayed me also of this gift. Not work of bounty that ever I did, nor that ever I might do; that giveth me neither comfort nor hope, but my wickedness only, for I have by them this certifying.

"Ye have heard in this writing here, how I have all his bounty. Then am I the salvation, by union of love, which he is; for the most strong moveth into himself the most feeble. This union is right delicious; that wot they who have assayed it. There is no pearl of the eye so dangerous when one putteth into it the iron or stone, which is its death, as is divine love, if one do against him. His being is always in the perfect plain of his pure will.

"Now may ye understand how my wickedness causeth [me] to have his bounty by choice, for my necessity. For God suffereth some time some evil to be done for greater good that afterward shall grow. For all those that be planted of the Father and come

* MS. "advantage."

into this world be descended of perfect into imperfect, that they may attain to the more perfect. And then the wound is opened, to heal where it is hurt. Without their witting, these folks be meeked of God himself, who is Almight."

*DIVISION XIV**

CHAPTER I

OF THE PROMISE THAT THIS SOUL MADE TO SPEAK OF SEVEN ESTATES, AND HOW THE FIRST IS THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

"I PROMISED," saith this soul, "concerning the takings of love to say some things of the seven estates that we call Beings, for so it is. And these be the degrees by which men ascend from the valley to the top of the mountain that is so separate that it seeth God only. And every degree hath in it its proper time of abiding."†

"The first estate is that a soul is touched of God by grace, and dissevered from sin, with intention according to her power to keep the commandments of God that he commandeth in the law, up[on] pain of death. And the soul beholdeth with great dread that God hath commanded her to love him with all her heart and her even-Christian as herself. This seemeth to this soul labour

* See note *infra*, p. 302.
† MS. "his full assise."

enough for her, of all that she can do though she lived a thousand year; to keep well the commandments according to her might.

"In this point I found myself," saith this free soul, "such a day I saw sometime. Now ye that stand so, be not dismayed of coming to a more high, no more shall he [be dismayed] if he have a gentle heart within, full of noble courage; but little hearts dare not great things take, nor ascend high, for default of love. These folk be but cowards that so do. Oh, what marvel it is they lead in dread, which suffereth them not that God work in them!"

CHAPTER II

OF THE SECOND STATE, WHICH IS IN FOLLOWING THE COUNSEL THAT OUR LORD GAVE TO COME TO PERFECTION

"THE second is that a soul behold what God counselleth to his special lovers, passing that that he commandeth. And he is no good lover that disposeth himself not to fulfil all that, by which he wist he might best please to his beloved. And then she, this creature aforesaid, seeth herself above all men's counsels to follow the works of mortifying nature, in despising riches, delights, and worships, to fulfil perfection of the evangel,

of which Christ Jesu is an ensample. And in this doing she may have no bitterness, nor by this may she not have dulness nor feebleness of body; no more also may the soul that of him is updrawn."

CHAPTER III

OF THE THIRD STATE, WHICH IS IN DOING THE WORKS OF PERFECTION WITH AFFECTION OF LOVE AND IN MORTIFYING THE WILL; BY OBEDIENCE TO FOLLOW OTHER MEN'S WILLS

"THE third is that a soul attend to the affection of love of works of perfection, by which her spirit burns by desires, accepting the love of these works to multiply in her. And what doth the subtlety of her thought? but make it seem to the understanding of her loving affection, that she cannot make offering to her Beloved that might comfort her, but of the thing that he loveth. For other gift is not of price in love, than the thing most beloved of the Beloved. And, therefore, the will of this creature loveth only works of goodness, by fervour of grace, in taking all labours in which she may her spirit feed. Then it seemeth her by righteousness of truth that she loveth not but works of goodness, for she wot not what to give to love

unless she makes sacrifice of this; for no death might be to her so great martyrdom as the abstinence of these foresaid works that she loveth, for this is the delight of her pleasure and the life of the will that she nourisheth in her of him. After this she relinqu[ish]eth these works in which she hath this delight and putteth to death the will that she hath of this life and obligeth herself to do the martyrdom of her will, by obedience to the will of others, in abstaining the works of her will, in fulfilling the will of others, her will for to destroy. And this is right hard, more hard without comparison than be the twain before. For it is more hard to overcome the works of the will of the spirit, than it is to overcome the will of the body [in order] to do the will of the spirit. And thus it behoveth her to lead, in breaking herself, for to enlarge the place where Love would have his being; and to encumber herself with many beings, so as to [dis]encumber herself to attain her being."

CHAPTER IV

OF THE FOURTH STATE, WHICH IS IN THE RELINQUISHING ALL OUTWARD WORKS THROUGH THE SWEETNESS THAT IS FELT BY HIGHNESS OF LOVE IN CONTEMPLATION

"THE fourth is, that a soul is drawn by highness of love into delight of thought by meditation, and relinquisheth all labours outward, and of obedience to others, by highness of love in contemplation. Then the soul is dangerous, noble, and delicious, in which she may not suffer that anything touch her but the touchings of pure delight of love, in the which she is singularly gladsom and jolly, and it maketh her proud, of abundance of love.

"Then showeth she the privities of her heart that maketh her very tender and to melt in sweetness of love and by concord of union whereby she is put in possession of these delights. And then holdeth the soul that there is none higher life than to have this, of which she hath lordship; for love hath so greatly fed her with his delights that she wot not that God hath any greater gift nigh to give to the soul than this love, which Love, by love, hath within her spread.

"Ah, what marvel is it if this soul be upholden or updrawn thus graciously! Love maketh her all drunken and suffereth her not to attend to any but him, by which strength in love she delighteth her so, that the soul may none other being hold precious,* for the great light of love hath covered her, that suffereth her not to see passing love. There is she overlooked, for so it is that there be two greater estates in this life than this is, but Love so leadeth that a soul is unseeing, by the gift of sweetness of the love that updraweth her as hastily as she approacheth to the same. Against this strength may none withstand; this is the soul that Love hath, by fine love passing herself, updrawn."

CHAPTER V

OF THE FIFTH STATE, WHICH IS WHEN A SOUL DEPARTETH FROM HER WILL IN PUTTING IT IN GOD BY A SPREADING RAVISHING OF THE MOVING OF DIVINE LIGHT

"THE fifth is, that a soul behold what God is, who IS, through whom all thing cometh; and she is not! For she is not anything that is. And this beholding giveth her a marvellous abashing to see that he is all bounty that hath put free will in her who is naught, but

* MS. "lay in price."

in all wickedness. Now hath the divine bounty put free will by pure divine goodness in her who is but in evils, that is, in all wickedness enclosed. For he would that this, who hath no being, had by this gift of him, being. Then the divine goodness poureth forth before this " will " a ravishing outpouring of moving divine light, which is diffused within the soul, the righteousness of him who is. And the knowing of this maketh her to separate the will from the place where he is not. Then it behoved her not to be, nor to put [her will] again where he is not. Whence he comes, there she ought to be.*

" Now seeth the will by the diffused† illumination of divine light. And this light giveth her this will to put again her will in God, which she cannot yield without this light, that it may go forth to him, unless it depart from her proper will. She seeth also her wretched nature by inclination of naught, to which nature she is inclined, and her will‡ hath put me in less than naught. Now seeth the soul this inclination and this perdition of naught of her nature and of her own will, and seeth this by illumination, that will ought to will the divine will without her willing. And for this was her will

* A very corrupt passage.
† MS. " spreading." ‡ *i.e.*, of Nature.

given. Thus departeth the soul from her will and the will departeth from this soul, so she putteth it again and giveth and yieldeth it [herself] in God where it was first, without self-love holding back herself, for to fulfil the perfect divine will that may not be fulfilled in the soul without this gift, so that the soul may have no other war or falliaunce.

"This gift maketh in her very perfection, and so it hath moved her to the nature of love that delighteth her with fulfilled peace and feedeth and filleth her with divine food. She recketh no more of the war that she was wont to have, for the will of her is nakedly laid in the place whence it was first taken, where it ought by rights to be. It gave her war as long time as she withheld will with her, out of its due place.

"Now is this soul not, for she seeth by abundance of divine knowing her naught, that maketh her now to put herself at naught. And she wot all, for she seeth by the deepness of knowing of her naught, which is so great to her sight, that she findeth neither beginning, measure, nor end of it; but a deep darkness without ground or bottom. And therefore findeth she herself without finding any ground or end. He findeth not this that may not to this attain. And the more that she seeth, in this knowing by truth, that she may not know her wickedness, of the

least point into which she is fallen by wickedness. And she is naked encircled of this harbour and of this garrison which is the darkness of sin, that containeth in him all perdition. Thus this soul seeth herself without her sight. This is the deepness of meekness that there sitteth in her chair and reigneth without pride. There may not the power of pride play, since that she seeth herself, for this unsitting untrue* maketh her see perfectly herself.

"Now is this soul set in low ground; and this lowness maketh her to see; there it hath no bottom, so it maketh her low, and this lowness maketh her to see right clearly the very sun of his high divine goodness, and that showeth to her by bounty, that it draweth her and moveth and oneth by knitting of bounty, in pure divine goodness, which is mistress. And this cometh by the knowing of these two natures that we have; the one is the divine bounty, and the other is the wickedness of the spending of her youth, that is old.† But mercy hath made peace with justice, firm and stable. And that hath led this soul into his bounty, by bounty now she is all and she is none, for her Beloved hath made her one.

* *i.e.*, the abiding in the boundless darkness where she finds no place to rest.

† *i.e.*, "an old story," or, for she is now old.

"Now is this soul fallen of love into naught, without which naught she may not be all. This falling is so perfect, if she be rightly fallen, that the soul may not arise out of this deepness, nor she ought not to do it. She ought to dwell within, and there loseth the soul pride and play, for the spirit is become bitter,* that suffereth her no more to be playing nor jolly. For her will is departed from her which made her oft love, in the highness of contemplation, and in the fourth estate, fierce and dangerous. But the fifth hath put her at point concerning this; it showeth to the soul herself. Now she liveth of knowing of the divine bounty. This knowing of the divine bounty maketh her to renounce herself, and then is the soul of all servitude quit, and of free being is put in possession. And this hath rested her of all things by excellent nobleness."

CHAPTER VI

OF THE SIXTH STATE, WHICH IS WHEN A SOUL IS OF ALL THINGS MADE FREE, PURE, AND CLARIFIED

"THE sixth is that a soul seeth not her naught by deepness of meekness, nor God, by highful bounty. But God seeth it in her of his

* *i.e.*, sobered rather than bitter.

divine majesty, who clarifieth her by himself, so that she seeth that none is but God himself, who is that from whence all thing are. And this that is, is God himself. And this soul seeth naught but God himself, for whoso seeth this of himself, he seeth not but God's self. And then is a soul in the sixth state, of all things made free, pure, and clarified, not glorified; for glorifying is in the seventh estate that we shall have in glory, that none can speak of.

"But pure, clarified, she seeth not God nor herself, but God seeth this of him, in her, for her, without her, and showeth her that there is none but her. Nor she knoweth naught but him, nor she loveth but him, nor she praiseth but him, for there is but he. That which is, is of his bounty; so loveth she his goodness which he hath by bounty given her. This bounty given, it is in God himself. And God may not from his goodness depart, that it should not dwell in him. And therefore is he the thing which is of his bounty. And bounty is what God is. So thus she seeth bounty, through his high bounty, by divine light, in the sixth estate, of which beholding the soul is clarified.

"There is none but he that is, and she seeth this being of his divine majesty by union of love of bounty, spread and laid in him. This she seeth in him, of him, who is maker

unmade, without touching of anything that is creaturely.* All is of his own proper being and this proper self-being is the sixth being of which we have promised the auditors to speak in the takings of Love. And Love hath by himself of his noblesse, the debts all paid."

CHAPTER VII

OF THE SEVENTH ESTATE

"AND the seventh keepeth he within himself, for to give us in everlasting glory. If we wit it not now, we shall wit it when the body our soul leaveth."

* MS. "without nighing"; Lat. *sine tactu alicuius* "*ad creaturam.*" The sense is that the soul sees by infused immediate knowledge, not by the knowledge that comes through created things.

DIVISION XV

THE ONLY CHAPTER

HOW THIS BOOK, THAT IS MADE RIGHT HIGH AND GREAT BY WORDS, SEEMETH RIGHT LITTLE AND LOW TO THEM THAT BE FALLEN OF LOVE INTO NAUGHT, AND BY WHOM IT WAS MADE

"O LADIES, nothing ye say," saith this soul that this book doth write. "Ye that be in being and stand without default, nothing ye say. No, soothly ye say nothing, but sit in peace, where Reason hath no lordship. I excuse me to you and to all those that lead in naught, that be fallen of love into this being, for I have made this book right great and high by words, which to you seem right little and low. But if ever I knew you, now excuse me of your courtesy, for need hath no law. I wot not to whom I may say mine entent. Now I did it for your peace and for to show the truth concerning low cowardice, the same that Reason hath to yield. But man's wit nor man's reason know nothing of inward love; nor inward love of divine science. My heart that was

so high, is cast down so low, that I may nothing reach; for all that may be said of God, or written, or in the heart may be thought, that to which the greatest sayings attain, it is more gabbings than it is true sayings.

"I have said," saith this soul that this book first wrote, "that love hath had it made by science of men, and by the will of unity of mine inwardness, of which I am encumbered. In this book it is shown, for love hath made it by encumbering my spirit, by these three which we have spoken of. And for this I say it is low and right little, however great the showing of this being seemed to me at the beginning, and the truth of them that such be, in the person of one, where all the others may be understood."

DIVISION XVI

THE ONLY CHAPTER

OF THE VERY ADDRESSING OF FINE LOVE. AND OF THE PRAISING OF THIS SOUL, AND HOW, BY HAVING NO MORE OF WILL, SHE IS ABOVE THE LAW, BUT NOT AGAINST THE LAW

"O EMERALD," saith Truth, "O the precious gem, very diamond, queen and empress! Ye give all by pure fine noblesse, without asking of love his richesse, but [only] the will of his divine pleasing. This is right of right, for this is the very addressing of fine love, who ever will maintain it.

"O ye deep worthy well, in whom the sun shineth, where the splendour of the sun continually is found, and the beams thrown out," saith Truth, "of divine science, we wit it by very sapience, that the splendour maketh you to work alway."

"Now Truth," saith this soul, "tell to none, whatever I say of God, but to him. This is truth; doubt ye not, lady, in this of me. I am not. And if it please you to wit

what I am, I shall tell it you by pure courtesy. Love hath me so wholly in his keeping that I have not wit nor will nor reason to do anything; wit it forsooth, but purely for him.

"O courteous and well taught," saith Holy Church that wisely can speak, "ye be the very star that showeth us the day and the sun without lack or spot, that taketh not of uncleanness. And the moon all full, for never ye shall diminish. And so ye be the lark that before the king goeth.

"Ye live all of the grain of wheat, for ye have no more of will. And they live on the chaff of rye and of rough barley, that have maintained* usages of outward wills, which be of human natures. Such folks be servants to the law, but these others be above the law; not against the law, witness of truth; she is fed and fulfilled, God is in her will."

* MS. "withholden"—*i.e.*, failed to give up in sacrifice these usages.

DIVISION XVII

CHAPTER I

OF SECRETS THAT THIS SOUL SPEAKETH OF, WHEREOF THE TRINITY PRAYETH HER TO LEAVE FOR DEEMING OF OTHERS THAT BE GOVERNED BY DESIRE, REASON, DREAD, WILL

"O RIGHT sweet divine Love that is in Trinity," saith this soul, "such work there is, that I marvel how they may endure, whom Reason and Dread govern work and will, and who can the great nobleness of naughted being devise."

"O pure, O heavenly," saith the Holy Trinity, "I pray you, dear daughter, that ye let this be. There is none so great clerk in the world that can speak to you. Ye have sat at my table, so I have given you my mess, and so have ye right well learned, and right well my mess savoured, and my vines of fulness, of which ye be the cutting. The root made you yours without more, nor never other shall be. Now have ye tasted honey and our wine savoured," saith the Holy Trinity, "none can speak but ye, for

ye may not any other usages in your heart take, to have in price, but this. I pray you, my dear daughter, my sister and my friend, if ye will, that ye say no more the secrets that ye wit, lest other should deem* where these taste, since Desire governeth them, Reason, Dread, and Will. Wit it well, my chosen daughter, Paradise is given to them."

"Paradise," saith this chosen one, "[not] unless you work it! even thus the deer will run to the death unless you hinder it.† Nevertheless I will be still, for this that ye allow‡ it me and I shall say verses of song by leave of fine love, concerning the high ascent, and the precious entry, and the worthy dwelling of mankind, bought and wrought of the sweet humanity of God's Son our Saviour, which the Deity sitteth in, in high possession in heaven, there above, on the right side of God the Father, for us to marvel. Will ye, right this day, by courtesy, dissolve§ me, ye fine Love?"

* *i.e.*, speculate or imagine, as opposed to the experience of the elect soul.

† MS. "ne werke ye it, also schalle the deire but if ye lette him to dethe, werke." Lat. *sic usque ad mortem operabitur capreus.*

‡ Allow = bid me.

§ MS. "depart."

CHAPTER II

OF CERTAIN THINGS THAT THIS SOUL WOULD BE DEPARTED FROM, BY THE WHICH SHE WAS SERVANT, AND OF THE LOVE (?) THAT SHE IS COME TO; AND HOW THE DIVINE BEHOLDING HATH BUT ONE ENTENT AND OF THE PEACE OF THAT FOOD THAT LOVE GIVETH HER

" Of what ?" saith Love.

" Of myself," saith this soul, " and of mine even-Christian and of all the world, and of affection of spirit and of virtues, wherein I have been servant, by the care and control of reason. And if I shall say sooth, so beastly I was in the time that I them served, that I may not with mine heart declare it. And in the meantime that I most had them, Love made me hear and speak of him. And nevertheless, as simple as I was, Will anon took me Love to love. And when Love saw me think of him, he refused me not by [the way of] the virtues, but threw me out of their little service, and led me to the divine school and there withheld me without doing any service.

" So am I of him fed, fulfilled, and sufficed. Thinking is worth no more, nor work, nor eloquence; Love draweth me so high. Think-

ing no more is worth; for his divine beholding it hath but one entent. Love hath made me by nobleness, seven verses of song to find that which is of pure Deity, whereof reason cannot speak.

"A love I have which hath no mother, proceeding of God the Father and also of God the Son. His name is the Holy Ghost, so have I in heart such union in love, that Love giveth me to love in him, that it maketh me a joyful life to lead. This is the peace of the food that Love giveth me to love him. Nothing will I ask him for too much that were of malice, but I ought to trust wholly in him, and that sweet lover to love."

DIVISION XVIII

CHAPTER I

OF WHAT ABUNDANCE OF GRACE OUR BLESSED LADY HAD IN THE WOMB OF HER MOTHER, AND OF CERTAIN BEHOLDINGS THAT BE CONVENABLE FOR THE MARRED, TO COME TO THE BEING THAT THIS BOOK SPEAKETH OF

"O LADY MARY, that art the vessel that more perfectly wert fulfilled of divine light, right in the womb of your mother, than were the twelve apostles the day of Pentecost, when they gathered the abundance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost! O blissful Lady, it was needful to you to be so; for I hold of God his Son, that if he had found in you as much vanity as the quantity of a wrinkle* in a kerchief, of necessity he had never made of you his mother. Lady, it may not be that ye had been [his mother]. And this may not be but that ye were it [indeed]. I behold this Lady at the Cross in the presence of her Son's death. Where the naked Adam did the wrong, the naked Jesu Christ it had. This, which Jesu Christ

* MS. " mountenance of a frounce."

did, set [things] better to rights* than that which the former set [wrong]. And this hath this Lady [thereof]. One is she, the mother of this Saviour.

" Lady, what would your thought [think] of them for this ?"

" Lady, what said ye to them for that there was in them cruelty ? Lady, what did ye to them for works of forfeit† that they did ? Lady, if it had been need, ye had for them that very time given your life rather than they should not have had forgiveness of God of that misdeed. But nay, for Jesu Christ made this accordance so abundantly, so anguishously. Why so abundantly ? Forsooth it is, that as much of his blessed blood as would have stood upon the point of a needle, had been sufficient to have bought an hundred thousand thousand worlds, if there had been so many worlds. This he gave for us with such right great abundance, for he will rob me by this, and separate me of myself, for to make me live of divine pleasure. Why so anguishously ? For this, that I hold, that if all diseases of deaths and of other torments that have been or shall be in reasonable creatures from the time of Adam unto the time of Antichrist, and all these miseases toforesaid, were in one

* MS. " laid better the right."
† *i.e.*, sin.

creature, truly it were but a point of the misease that Jesu Christ had in his worthy precious Body by one of his pains, without more, for the onbinding* of his tenderness and cleanness. And then this I beheld, how the divine nature oned him for us to the nature of man in the person of God the Son. Ah, ah, what a thing it is, to think of; who durst ask this, unless his own bounty had made it; that Jesu Christ should be poor and despised and tormented for us? What marvel is it he might not withhold himself from this work; for the support of love by which he loved us constrained him thereto, forasmuch as he had taken the nature† of man, by which he might do this. How might he have done this? but that the divine nature took nature of man oneing him thereto in the person of God the Son. This is thought right enough for us to be disencumbered all the day of our life, if we will suffer the right work in us. I have not suffered it to do in me this work, for he would have made me free in this point, if I had heard him as soon as he had given me this thought of him: but I would not. Who shall wholly restore the hideousness of this loss? My opinion became a foolishness to me, for besides that I thought to find my works, naught did I but lose. And then this I

* *i.e.*, union. † MS. "kind."

beheld, how he that is God and Man was despised on earth in the nature of mankind, shamefully for me. And the great poverty that he took for me [I beheld], and the grievous death that he suffered for me. In these three points be all that is made comprised without comprehending."

"O Truth, Way, and Life, what is this for us to think of? Lord, this is a greater thing to embrace our hearts in the love of you, by thinking on one of your benefits that ye have done for us, than were all the world and the heaven and the earth, if they were set on fire for to destroy one body.* And then I beheld his great purity and truth.

"Then Truth said to me, that I shall not see the divine Trinity until my soul be all so clean without spot of sin, as is the soul of Jesu Christ. And the soul of Jesu Christ was glorified in that very time that it was made of the divine Trinity and oned to deadly† body and to divine nature in the person of the Son, in the same moment that she was made, and oned, and knit to these two natures as perfectly as it is now at this time. Since that his soul was oned to his divine nature it might not be that the body that was mortal, might do sin.

* Cf. 1 Cor. xiii 3.
† *i.e.*, human, mortal.

"And then I beheld who these should be that should ascend to heaven. And Truth said to me this, that none shall ascend but he only that should reflect* the Son of God himself. That is to say, that none may ascend but they only that be God's sons by divine graces, of whom he said: *This is my brother, my sister and my mother, that doth the will of God my Father.*†

"And then I beheld the seraphins and asked of them for what cause were done the works that charity did of the Incarnation of the Manhood of Jesu Christ, or of this, that the divine Trinity made them, and of all that he shall do without end in creature, of his bounty.

"And Love told me it was but all solely for one thing, and that is, that the divine will of all the Trinity would it. And this is a sweet beholding and a profitable, to them that behold it, and to disencumber them of themselves, to approach‡ this being that we have spoken of.

"Now we have seven beholdings that be for the marred, profitable enough. The first is of the Apostles, the second is of the Maudelyn, the third is of John Baptist, the fourth is of the Virgin Mary, the fifth how

* MS. "alight"; Lat. *elucidavit*.
† Cf. Matt. xii 50; Mark iii 35.
‡ MS. "for to nigh."

nature divine is oned to the nature of mankind in the person of the Son. The sixth beholding is how the manhood of Christ Jesu was tormented for us. The seventh is of the seraphins, how they be in the divine will."

CHAPTER II

OF THE BEHOLDINGS THAT THIS SOUL HAD IN THIS FORESAID LIFE

"Now I shall tell you the beholdings that I had in this life, that is aforesaid. I beheld him in me and me in him, and willed great wills for him. I allow me of these three above all thing, howsoever it may be that these folks be of little peace, who in will and in desire dwell.

"I said thus in the meantime, that I wist not how to suffer it, and this beholding yielded me manner.

"O Lord, I wot not what this comprehendeth, your great everlasting might, your great everlasting divine wisdom, your great everlasting divine bounty. And this I say as for me, I know not what ye be, for I know not your everlasting might, your everlasting wisdom, your everlasting bounty.

"Nor I wot not what I am, for I wot

naught of my passing* feebleness, of my passing foolishness,† of my passing wickedness.

" Lord, ye be one bounty, by bounty outpoured and all in you, and I am one wickedness by wickedness all outpoured and all in me.

" Lord God, ye be all thing: thus is all thing made by you, and nothing is made without you, and I am naught; thus is all thing made without me.

" Lord, ye be all might, all wisdom and all goodness, without beginning, without comprehending, without end, and I am all feebleness, all foolishness and all wickedness, without beginning, without comprehending, without measure.

" Lord, ye be one only God in three Persons, and I am one only enemy in three mischances.‡

" Lord, ye be Father and Son and Holy Ghost, and I am feebleness, foolishness and wickedness.

" Lord, how much comprehend§ I of your might, of your wisdom and of your goodness? As much as I comprehend of my feebleness, of my foolishness, and of my wickedness.

* *i.e.*, exceeding.
† MS. " sotines."
‡ *i.e.*, faults. O. Fr. *mescheance*; Lat. *miseriis*.
§ *i.e.*, understand; Fr. *comprendre*.

"Lord God, how much comprehend I of my feebleness, of my foolishness, and of my wickedness? As much as I comprehend of your might, of your wisdom, of your goodness. And if I might comprehend one of these two natures I should comprehend both. This is the measure, and for as much as I know naught of my wickedness as compared to that which it is, I know not of your goodness, as compared to that which it is. And yet that little that I know of my wickedness, it hath given me the knowing that I have of your goodness.

"O Lord God, soothly it is little, so little that it may not be said, for it is naught as in regard of the other part,* and therefore ye be and none but ye; all your truths grant it you, in me."

CHAPTER III

HOW THE BEHOLDING OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD AND OF HER WRETCHEDNESS SENT THIS SOUL TO MEDITATION. AND OF THE PRIVY SPEECH THAT SHE HAD TO GOD IN HER MEDITATION

"AND then this I beheld, between the wickedness of me and between the goodness of him, what thing I might do to appease me to him.

* MS. "deal."

This put me in meditation by reasonings on one side, in consenting of will, without receiving [of God's favours ?].*

"And then I said thus, that if it might be that I had never been, so that I had never misdone against his will, if it pleased him, it would be my pleasaunce.

"And then I said to him, that if it might be that he would give me as great torments as he is mightful, for to avenge him of my defaults, if it pleased him, it were my pleasaunce.

"And then after, I said thus to him, that if it might be so that I were even as he is, and should be without faillaunce, and with this I should suffer as much of poverty and of despites and torments as he hath, of bounty of wisdom, and of might, so I had never done against his will, if it were his pleasing, it were my pleasaunce.

"And then I said to him, that if it might be that I had of me as much of worthiness as he hath of himself, so that it might not be taken from me nor diminished, but if I alone willed it myself, I should lay all this in him and go to naught, ere than I might anything withhold, that came not to me from him; and though it might be that I might have all this beforesaid, I might not do it to hold anything that came not to me from him.

* MS. "by comprehending of partie in consenting of will, without receivings."

"And then I said this, that if I had of my proper condition this [which was] aforesaid, I should love better and rather choose that it went to naught without recovering, than that I should have it, unless it came of him. And if I had as great torments as he is of might, I should love better these torments, if they came of him, than I should glory that came not of him, [even were I] to have it everlastingly.

"And then I said to him, rather than I should henceforward do thing that were against his pleasing, it were more in my choice that his manhood should suffer on the Cross as much as he hath suffered of torments for me—if it might be. I say this, for this: *rather* than that I should do thing that were his displeasaunce.

"And then I told him, that if I wist that all that he hath made of naught, I and all other thing be it understood, must go to naught, except I misdid against his will, it should go to [naught] of my choice, rather than that I misdid.

"And then I told him that if I wist that I should have as much of torment without end as he hath of goodness unless I misdid against his will, I should choose rather to go suffer those pains everlastingly, than that I should do thing that I wist should displease his will.

"And then I told him, that if it might be that he could and would give me, by his will, as much of goodness as he hath of worth everlastingly, I should not love it but for him. And if I lost it, I should nor reck thereof but for him, and if he yielded it me again after this loss, I should not take it but for him. And if it might better please him that I went to naught and had naught of being than that I should take this gift of him, I should love more that I went to naught. And if it might be that I had the same that he hath in him, as well as he hath of him, with [the assurance] that it should never fail if I would, and I wist that it might better please him that I suffered as much torment of him as he hath of goodness in him, I should love it better than for to dwell in that glory.

"And though I wist that the sweet manhood of Christ Jesu and the Virgin and all the court of heaven might not suffer that I had the torments everlastingly, but [rather] that I had the being that I was come from, and God seeth this in himself (if it might be this pity of them and this good will), and thus saith to me: 'If thou wilt, I shall yield thee that which thou art come from, by my will, for this that my friends of my court will it, but were it not their will, thou shouldest not have it, wherefore I yield thee

this gift, if thou wilt, take it!" It should fall in my choice rather without end to dwell in torment than I should take it, since I had it not of his sole will. So I [would] refuse it at the prayers of the Humanity, and of the saints, and of the Virgin Mary. I might not suffer it unless I had it of the pure love that he hath to me, for me, of his pure bounty and of his sole will and love that a Beloved hath to his lover.

"And then I said to him that if I wist it might more please him that I loved another more than him?—Here me faileth wit—thus it goeth*—this I feel not might nor will to grant, but I answered that I should take counsel with myself.

"And then I said this, that if it might be that he might love another more than me?—Here me faileth wit—I cannot answer, nor will, nor grant it.

"And then this I said to him, that if it might be that he might will that another loved me more than he loveth me?—Here me faileth also wit—I cannot answer no more than afore, but alway I said that of all that I should take counsel, and right so I did. I

* The soul cannot express fully the painful sacrifice she perceives; possibly the sentence is left unfinished, and it is to be understood that now God asks these things of her, when she says "I said to him."

took counsel from himself and told him that these three things were right hard, more than the other were before, [namely], that I should love another more than him, and he another more than me, and that another should love me more than he—wit failed me here, for I might not to none of these three things grant my will. And always he assailed me for to have an answer, and so much I loved myself [together] with him, that I might not for nothing have discretion in this, and thus I was in distress. So went I not lightly away. This wot none, but if he have assayed this point. And alway I might have no peace, unless I answered to this aforesaid.

"Ah, I still loved myself—this had me—therefore I might not lightly answer. And if I had not loved myself, the answer had been swift and light, and always it behoved me to answer, if I would not lose myself in him, for which mine heart suffered so great distress."

DIVISION XIX

CHAPTER I

OF THE ANSWER THAT THIS SOUL GAVE OF THE THREE THINGS TO WHICH SHE ANSWERED NOT AFORE. AND OF THE MARTYRDOM OF WILL AND LOVE

NOW I shall tell you my answer that I said to him, concerning himself, that he would prove me of all points. Alas! what have I said? I shall speak no word more; the heart [is] made alone of him in this battle. What shall I answer in anguish of death? That he would thus depart from his lover, whom he had so well arrayed, that well I weened it might have endured! But it might be so, and if it were so, that by a game of change he might will this and that he *did* will it with all his will, [then] I answered thus, and said to him:

"O Lord, if it might be that this change might everlastingly endure in fact, as it is in supposition; I love you, for you and of you. Therefore I did not want it for your sake. And if I had the same that ye have, with the creation that ye have given me, and

might also well do my will, as I do of the will that ye have given me: and also if I had this, that I were equal unto you save in this, that I might change my will for other than for me, ye should not do this, since ye would it without any of your goodness; these three points that be right grievous to grant. And if I wist without doubt that your will would it, without diminishing of your divine goodness, I would grant it without anything further willing more; my will taketh its ending in this saying."

Thus my will is martyred, and my love martyred; ye have them to martyrdom brought. Their weenings be fully inclined, mine heart thought sometime, alway to have lived of love by desire of good will. Now be these two things ended in me that made me out of my childhood go; and there it showed me the country of freedom.

Then came to me Righteousness, and asked me what sparing I would have of him or of thing that torment might do to me. Then came Mercy, and asked me what help would I have of him.

I answered anon this, that [as] I was, I would [have] no more help of him, nor of anything that might do me good.

And then came Love to me fulfilled with bounty, that so often times had cast me out of wit, and in the fire had given me death.

"Ye have something heard there," he said, "I hold all thing that was and is and shall be; I am of all goodness fulfilled, take of me what ye will; if ye will have me all, I unwill it not," saith my friend, "how seemeth it you of me? I am Love fulfilled with Bounty. This that *ye* will, *we* will it," saith my friend, "take your own will!"

I answered anon: "This that I am, is pure naught. Alas, what would pure naught? it has never nothing of will. I will nothing that is not of the bounty of Love. All thing that is of him, it is of him verily fulfilled and thus it is that nothing is, unless it be of him, and this I say hath me of all things consumed."

Now I began at this trial* of my youth and of my former spirits, to come again to this, that will was dead and my works ended and my love also, that made me jolly. For the outpouring of the divine love showed me by divine light, an highful opening approaching to the truth, that showed me suddenly him and me. Him so high and me so low, that I might no more from thence rise, nor help of myself have and that was best.

If ye understand not this, I may not amend it. This is a work miracleful; this, then, his lamentations† may not say.

* MS. "assize."
† MS. "waymentings."

CHAPTER II

HOW THE AFFECTION OF TENDERNESS OF LOVE THAT THE SOUL FEELETH "IN LIFE OF SPIRIT" WHICH SHE WEENETH IT TO BE IN GOD, IS IN HERSELF, AND OF THE PROFIT OF NAUGHT WITTING

"HERE ye have," saith this soul, "some beholding how I complained for to disencumber myself and for to find the way that I complained of when I was marred. This that I was then, is 'marring,' for all those be marred that have anything of affection in spirit. And this beholding is in the life of spirit, by affection of tenderness of love that the soul hath to herself, but *she* weeneth that it is in God—this love that she hath—of which she is so attainted. But in well-understanding it is herself that she loveth, without her witting. And there they may be deceived, that love by tenderness that they have to affection, which suffereth them not to come to knowing. Thus they lead as they did in work of youth, and dwell so long in works till* they have affection of spirit."

"O God," saith divine Love, that through him resteth concerning this, in soul naughted, "how far is their life from the life of free-

* Perhaps "while."

ness, over which not-willing hath lordship. And this naught willing soweth in souls the divine seeds, fulfilled of divine will of God. This seed may never fail, but few folks dispose them to receive this seed.

" I have found many of them who be ' perished ' in affection, and of the ' marred ' in life of spirit, by works of virtues, in desires of good will. But I have found few of ' gentil-in-being ' and fewer of them that be in ' freedom ' without fail, of which this book speaketh, that have one sole will that fine love maketh to have; for fine love maketh to have one only will and one love. And therefore, divine will is alway one same will with Love. And this love is of that which is wholly and solely fine in the state of work divine. This soul is no-one by naughting, and she recketh not in this naughting, though the serpent her devour. Since God may neither wax nor lessen in his work [so her joy in it may neither wax nor lessen].

" If she took work of herself, she should be ' for ' her; if she be no-one, her working may not be. And since the bounty of God may not diminish, dis-ease* may not in her

* Dis-ease = discontent, or here, I think, a feeling of monotony due to the hiddenness of God's work in her. She would not grow discontented if she dwelt on his work, but it may arise if she centres on her own effort or life.

grow of his work, unless it wax of her own. And if it wax of her, she should be, 'for' herself. If she be nakedly naught, this being* may not be."

"This is sooth," saith this free soul; "in this point I am, by naughting, myself, for when I leave and naught myself perfectly, then his miracles give me very knowing of his divine gifts. Faith is the cause of this."

* *i.e.*, monotony.

DIVISION XX

CHAPTER I

HOW THIS SOUL IS IN HER HIGHEST PERFECTION WHEN HOLY CHURCH TAKETH NO ENSAMPLE OF HER. AND WHAT HOLY CHURCH IS. AND OF THREE THINGS THAT CAUSETH THIS SOUL THAT SHE HATH NO DREAD

"THIS soul," saith Love, "is in her highest perfection and most nigh the far night when Holy Church taketh not of ensample* in her life. She is then under the work of cleanness, and above the work of charity. She is so far from the works of virtue that she may not understand their language. But the works of virtues be all within this soul enclosed, that obey her without any withstanding. And for this enclosing, Holy Church cannot know her; the which Holy Church is specially the dread of God, for the holy dread of God is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And yet nevertheless, the dread of God might disturb the being of freeness.

* *i.e.*, takes no notice of her life.

"The being of freeness hath no dread for she hath passed the point of the spear in putting away the pleasaunce of body, and in slaying the wills of the spirit. She hath all her love laid upon her night. She recketh not of herself, nor that she is naught. The Sum of all* hath acquit her of her debts that she owed Jesu Christ. She oweth him naught however [much] she was against him in debt. The 'most' showeth him that which of 'less' acquitteth her. But they that would possess the full assurance without inward [feeling] of unbelief,† them doth the great wit of nature deceive. They suffer themselves to be governed by affection of life of spirit in sufficing of themselves. And that robbeth them of the knowledge, so that they may not the fulness of this deepness understand, nor the goodness of God for them, largely trust. And therefore, they dwell in 'works.'

"Alas, how they be deceived, who of this think them to suffice! For all that ever a creature may do of works of goodness, it is naught as in regard of his bounty; for the divine wisdom gave not his highful goodness

* MS. "most." Cf. earlier part of book. An obscure passage.

† MS. "would have without any incredence within the full assize"; *i.e.*, the sense of insecurity is a last purgation.

to souls, but for his own goodness' self. And only by [this] one understanding of this great highful everlasting goodness doth new goodness grow."

CHAPTER II

OF THE WORTHINESS OF THE BOUNTY OF GOD AND OF THE UNION THAT MAKETH BETWEEN GOD AND THIS SOUL

BOUNTY is more worth than all the work that any creature may do within an hundred thousand year or all Holy Church. The farthest of this is most nigh, for it oneth from within this being in himself, and it maketh her alway to be knit to his will without removing her therefrom, for thing that may fall to her. All is one to her without dread and without joy, for she is no one in this one. And then hath she no more to do of God than God of her, for he is and she is not. She hath nothing withholden in naughting of herself; it is enough that he is. And she is not; for she is without being, there where she was, ere she was not. So hath she of God this which she hath; and she is this which God is, by union of love, in that point where she was, before God had her of his bounty made.

There she prayeth not,* no more than she did ere that she was aught. She receiveth this that she hath, of the bounty of God, of the will of his love, of this gentle far night. Thus prayeth she not. That which she most loved, is now that she most hateth, as it is the manner. She hath nothing withholden. And [in] that [she] hath neither more nor less of love himself, for this hath she no place, nor recketh of anything that may fall. She hath neither bottom nor floor, therefore hath she no place, and if she hath no place, then hath she not love for herself. This anyone may say! All work is forbidden her,† and she is in the simple Being of the Deity, as it was commanded sometime of Jesu Christ, the Son of God the Father.‡

To this end come they who are not anxious for themselves,§ for love giveth all thing to this soul, and even acquitteth her to her even-Christian. "Thus it is right,"

* Latin trans. quotes Dionysius: *Non orat*, not vocally or consciously. *Sed consurgit ignote ad ipsius unionem que est super omnem substantiam et cognicionem.*

† The Latin translator's note effectually disposes of all objections to this sentiment. He says: "If the soul never did any work she would not have written this book for our edification; but it is to be understood, as I have said before, as being for a short time"—*i.e.*, the time when the soul is in prayer.

‡ Cf. John xvii 21 *seq.*

§ MS. "Have not of what to do."

saith she, " that all things be hallowed to me, even as all things be made for me, and for this I take it, as for mine, without challenging. Why should I not do thus? Ye, Lord, have loved me and have done and shall do; with all your power, as Father ye have loved me and have done and shall do; with all your wisdom, as Son and brother, ye have loved me and have done so and shall do with all your goodness, as friend. Then may I well say that ye love none more than me, for no more than your goodness may suffer it, [otherwise than] that your high beloved Mother and also the angels, the saints, men and women, should have glory of your high everlasting bounty, passing their deserts, no more may not your high everlasting goodness suffer that I have the torments of my deserts, but [rather] that I receive as much of your mercy continually, as ye have of might compared to the other that I should suffer, if it were not for your bounty. In these words is the gloss of this song."

Therefore his eye beholdeth me: that he loveth none more than me. This is the substance of my heart.

Therefore his eye beholdeth me, he may not suffer nor will, but that he be conjoint within me.

Therefore his eye beholdeth me, that he loveth none more than me; my necessity requireth it.

Therefore his eye beholdeth me. I will nothing that he willeth not. Such power hath love over me.

Therefore his eye beholdeth me, that he loveth none more than me. Ah, ah, fine love of my heart.

Therefore his eye beholdeth me, thou makest of two wills one will. Such is the nature of thee.

Therefore his eye beholdeth me, that he loveth none more than me.

Now—Amen.

Here endeth the book that Love calleth THE MIRROR OF SIMPLE SOULS.

*Who that this book will understand:
Take that Lord to his Spouse Lovande
That is God in Trinity.

Jesu, mercy and grace.
Jesu, pray for us.

Sigh and sorrow deeply:
Mourn and weep inwardly:
Pray and think devoutly:
Love and long continually.

M. En Dieu
Desormes. *N.*

* These three verses occur in many mediaeval MSS. They are printed here from the Bod. MS.

THE TRANSLATOR'S EPILOGUE

O glorious Trinity in whom is all goodness, hallowed be your holy name, in heaven and in earth, and fulfilled be your will.

I thank you, blissful Lord God, with all my poor heart, for all the gifts of grace that ye have given and done to me, that am your poor unworthy creature. And that you deigned of your excellent Deity, that I, the most wretched and unfit,* should translate this book. And for that the work is now ended, thanked and praised be ye of all good creatures. Lord, unwitting I am, unmighty and unable to have done it, but only by your help and grace. Therefore to you only, be the worship and the praising thereof, and of all good works that be done under the sun.

Beseeching you, Eternal God, if it be pleasing to you, that those that read this book mistake no word thereof. But, good Lord, of your great benignity, give them the grace of ghostly feeling. Inspire them with your Holy Ghost that they may fully by the virtue of love understand it in the same wise as it is devoutly meant, that it may turn you, to worship and to them, profit of soul, by your endless might and bounty.

* MS. "unconvenable."

O my Lord God, mercy, mercy. I am a sinner, as ye well know, by which, alas, unworthy I am to praise you and to laud you. But all-might, all-wisdom, and all-goodness, all-glory, all-grace, all-sweetness, all-virtues, all-victories, all-honours, all-bliss, all-joy and all-magnificence, Lord, worship, laud, praise and magnify you everlastingly without end.

Jesu Mercy.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

NOTES

NOTE 2, p. 14.

M. N. interprets the mystic in the light of moral theology, and supplies the ascetical basis of the author's more transcendent doctrines. Possibly X (the author) presupposed this explanation of growth in the conquest of virtue, but he seems also to have had in mind the theory, developed further on in the book, namely, that the soul when liberated by Love becomes free from the anxious preoccupation concerning Virtue and—being, of course, in grace and habitually pursuing virtue—finds her attention focussed directly upon the contemplation of God's love. In proportion as she grows in union, her self-consciousness diminishes. As the revelation of God to the soul progresses, so the soul becomes more passive, both with regard to effort after virtue and search for knowledge. These increase steadily by God's work in the soul, but there is ever less and less self-consciousness concerning these things.

The constantly growing factor, the hunger and thirst after God, supplies the right affective impetus, which, in the earlier stages, was known—and to some extent remains always—as a desire for personal holiness and a knowledge of God.

The affective element outlasts the other personal elements, but is itself purified in the "far night" of aridity, and is later realised as being but the last human trappings of self behind which the "Spirit of God" resides in that part of the soul completely inaccessible to self-consciousness.

Note 2, p. 24.

"*For sin must be had in conscience.*" This does not mean that sin is merely a matter of subjective conscience, and that by directing his intention aright a man delivers himself from responsibility for fleshly sin. Rather, assuming freedom from the grosser sins and progress in the spiritual life, infirmities, frailties, even venial sins, are not to be overemphasised, and in this state no sin is committed without the deliberate consent of conscience: "Sin must be had in conscience."

If the conscience is directed wholly towards God, the soul enjoys a freedom of spirit in which the lawful demands of nature can now be legitimately satisfied without fear of impulses to excess, and without need of the constant check of violent self-denial. But at no stage of the spiritual life does the soul find itself able to give up watchfulness nor to abandon all deliberate mortification.

"*Will a man or nil he so, in the time after.*" Frailties committed by surprise not by consent of conscience and repudiated, at the time or after, by the will, are not necessarily sins. But such actions, though indeliberate, can become sinful by a return of evil desire to which the heart yields itself.

Note 1, p. 104.

This qualifying statement together with others are according to the doctrine of Dionysius Areopagita. They save the treatise from the errors of Pantheism and of Quietism. The author guards against the Pantheistic theory that the soul can be so absorbed into the divine nature as to become identical with it. "*Not by nature divine.*" "The treasure fulfilled which is in the Trinity" becomes the property of the soul by the active and constantly

renewed outgoing of love, the gift of God—*i.e.*, in action. There is never identification of nature. Furthermore, the states of indifference and unknowing, which are described, are not *quietistic passivity*. The author insists on the interior spiritual activity inaccessible to the senses, and therefore indescribable, but issuing in the soul's possession of the treasure "enclosed in the Trinity."

Note 3, p. 105.

The division of souls into two classes, those guided by Reason, and those led by Love—*i.e.*, rationalism *v.* mysticism—is a very old and a very modern concept. The author makes a bold personification here, definitely subordinating the former family to the latter; "Holy Church the little, or less, or Holy-Church-under-*The* Holy Church."

No heresy is intended, such as the Jansenist theory of the "elect," but merely a statement of the probable relation in which "Rationalising Reason" and "Intuitive Love" stand to each other. The bold humour of the passage is intensified and preserved from unpleasantness by Holy-Church-the-little's acceptance of the stricture.

The key to the situation is indicated in the fact that she "praises them in the glosses of our scriptures." The "glossing of the scriptures" is one of the true functions for the "rationalistic" faculties.

Note 2, p. 205.

This passage is important. It explains the apparent contradiction which the previous paragraphs offer to the general message of the book, in the statement that some souls *do* find the way of

perfection by the virtues, etc., and that this is asked of them. Some special asking is implied. Perfection is only thwarted when the soul goes unbidden in this " search of the virtues."

It is not the soul itself which feels—only the surface regions are affected—" this is not *she*." Cf. St Francis de Sales's teaching.

In this and the following chapters we must distinguish those who are " in life of spirit "—*i.e.*, souls who have passed through the life of the " perished " and of the " marred " states—but who have not attained to the life of the " free souls."

Note 1, p. 241.

" *Thoughts of partie*." A partie is a game in which a subject is discussed from two or more points of view. In the courts of love of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, subjects were thus debated and poems—*jeu-partis*—presented for prize competitions.

The meaning here seems to be " by thoughts framed in dialogue," but below, " in putting out," etc., " by avoiding all discursive meditation, all dwelling on particular points of prayer."

Note 1, p. 251.

St Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis* describes seven stages by which the mind ascends to God. The first three deal with the corporeal nature of the senses, imagination, the rational soul of man. The fourth to the seventh show the supernatural intervention of grace by the help of which we see God revealed in his Being (4), in his goodness (5), and in the mystery of the Trinity (6). The seventh stage is the repose of ecstasy.

It is evident that this system has influenced the author of the *Mirror* (see Division XIV, chaps. 6 and 7); it represents the reaction of the pluralistic mysticism against the theories of the twelfth-century revival of monistic philosophy and the mystics. The Franciscan school identifies the Beatific Vision with Love, and makes Love the method by which it is apprehended. Freedom in love is the keynote of Franciscan spirituality as it is of the *Mirror*. St Bernard did not hold that the Godhead is revealed to man by immediate intuition, but is known through species.

Our author is more influenced by the " Seven Stages " of the Ascent to God in St Augustine's *De Quantitate Animae*, than by the treatise of Richard of St Victor, who describes six stages of contemplation.

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